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PRINCESS PUCK.

CHAPTER XXIII.

POLLY may have been a clever woman, as Mr. James Brownlow had said she was, but in his catalogue of her abilities he omitted to mention her one great gift, her undeniable talent for getting things. She was a true collector and picker-up of trifles; she had brought this too little appreciated art to a rare perfection, and she never went anywhere without acquiring something, never came home completely empty-handed, never declined or passed by a single article or opportunity however trivial or cumbersome. Her motto was *It might be useful*. "If she went to the Sahara," Bill said, "she would bring home sand for the chickens' run." But besides the collector's art Polly possessed the true genius for getting, not begging nor demanding, but annexing calmly as by right divine, or acquiring gracefully as bestowing a favour in accepting one. "I don't ask for things," she used to say; "people always offer them to me. I am sure I don't know how it is, but they do, and it looks so rude to refuse."

So she never refused, and seldom went anywhere or met anyone without directly or indirectly turning the occasion to profit. Bymouth did not promise a very likely field for her abilities, but even here she found and seized an opportunity. It was

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late in the visit certainly, not till after their fellow-lodgers had gone. This took place on Tuesday, the day on which Bill told Kit Harborough of the claim.

The drawing-room family left at one o'clock, the cousins watching them go. They drove to Bybridge in a small wagonette, and it was interesting to see them getting into it, for the family was large, far too large for the wagonette.

"They will never do it," Bella said as she watched them.

"After the way in which they packed into that bedroom," Polly remarked severely, "I should say they could go anywhere or anyhow."

"They had two bedrooms," Bill said; "there was another up the yard."

"I call it positively indecent," was Polly's opinion, but Bill asked: "Where is the indecency? The girls were in one and the boys in the other. Mrs. looked after the girls and Mr. after the boys; they had more space apiece than we three have, and I am sure we are all right."

Polly explained that their own arrangement was quite different and much better, but Bill, who had now joined Bella at the window, did not pay any attention to her.

"Oh, do come and look, Polly," she said; "they have nearly done it. They would do it easily if it were not

for the luggage; they ought to have a cart for that."

"They are far too stingy," Polly observed contemptuously.

"The mother will nurse the baby," Bill went on, "and the father the next-sized one, and the little girl that big bundle. They have left one box out."

"Where will they put it?" Bella said.

"They can't get it in front," was Bill's opinion; "the coachman can hardly see round the rampart of luggage as it is. They are going to try though. If they would put it inside it could be managed. There it goes! I knew it would fall off the front! If you were to put it—"

"Come in, Bill!" Polly seized Bill's arm. "Come in at once! It is no business of yours; let people manage their own concerns. I am ashamed of you!"

But Bill was not ashamed of herself; she was far too much absorbed in the difficulties of the family to care for Polly, and when someone in the wagonette below having heard her voice called up to know what she had said, she leaned out of the window again and told them. "Put it inside; I believe you could do it then,—not that way, small end down. You don't mind me suggesting it, do you? It would have been such a pity" ("Bill!") "if you couldn't all get in. That's right; now" ("Bill! Shut that window, Bella.") "if the two little boys sit on it and the biggest one stands on the step—that's splendid!"

"Shut that window, Bella!"

Bella shut the window almost on to Bill's neck, leaving her no choice but to draw her head in. The family, who did not appear to resent her interference, shouted their thanks to where she had been, while Bella, who had been as much annoyed as Polly

by Bill's behaviour, joined the elder cousin in telling the culprit so.

But Bill did not mind much. "It would have been such a pity if they had not managed it," she said, "and I don't believe they could any other way."

"It was no affair of yours," Bella said; "I don't see why you wanted to make such an exhibition of yourself. There were people passing too, one of those shooting men from the River House had just come out of the post-office; he did stare at you, and no wonder!"

Bill said she did not care, which was true; but she did not know that the man described the incident, inclusive of her and her directions, in Kit Harborough's hearing that evening. Kit recognised her from the description, as Gilchrist had done when his lawyer-friend Ferguson described her, and Kit, like Gilchrist, did not betray her identity. He said even less about her than did Gilchrist, though he experienced a youthful desire to knock the informant down when he announced an intention of finding out who the girl was. But the pugilistic wish was restrained, Kit reflecting that, as Bill was leaving the day after to-morrow, it was most unlikely the fellow would find out anything about her; and, after all, that he should wish to do so was, in Kit's opinion, quite natural and only what was to be expected. It was also, in the same opinion, quite natural that Bill should assist the family in the wagonette with her advice, quite natural and quite right; indeed, so right that Kit never questioned its propriety at all, possibly because she did it; though in his defence it must be said that he troubled less about the correctness of an action than did Gilchrist, thinking not at all of "how it looked." He had been brought up among people who, being quite sure

of themselves and their public, never troubled their heads about how a thing might look.

Polly had not been so brought up, and, conscious that her actions would not always bear investigation, she was most anxious that appearances should, when possible, be beyond reproach. She lectured Bill proportionately, and was, as usual, listened to with indifference; but when at last Polly brought her remarks to a close with, "It was like everything else you do, most unladylike," Bill said rather wistfully: "I suppose I am unladylike, Polly?"

"Hopelessly," was the crushing answer.

"I should like to be better," the voice was a shade more wistful; "I would try if I knew what to do."

"Don't lean out of the window to give advice to strangers," Polly said, and Bill making no reply, she began to perceive that her young cousin was in an unusually pliant mood. Seeing this she seized the opportunity, the first that had offered, of speaking to her about her behaviour to Gilchrist. As a preliminary she heaved a deep sigh, and, after a quick glance at the girl, began with chastened mildness.

"After all," she said, "to lean out of the window like that is only a small thing, but it is an illustration of your ways. Your ways often trouble me, Bill, do you know that? Sometimes I feel as if I shall give you up entirely, and then again sometimes I think you really are ignorant and would try to do better if you only knew how your behaviour looked."

Bill twisted restively, Polly's voice having taken on the melancholy semi-nasal drawl which belonged to her part of the grieved guardian. Bill did not believe in her at any time, and that afternoon the manner irritated instead of amusing. But she was sincerely convinced of her own shortcomings, and though she had no great

opinion of Polly, there was no one else to whom she could go; so she said: "Tell me what I do wrong; you need not put in all that about being sorry and the rest; I know how that goes, and can fill it in for myself."

"Thank you, Bill," Polly said with dignity; but quickly seeing the girl's attitude of mind and the precariousness of her own opportunity, she shortened her part and, after a brief remark on her cousin's impoliteness and her own forbearance, got to business without further delay.

"You want to know where I think you wrong? I will tell you one or two things,"—she spoke as one who has a wide range of examples from which to choose. "There is your behaviour to Gilchrist to begin with; you do not behave at all nicely to him."

"To Theo!" Bill exclaimed in astonishment, "to him! What do I do wrong to him?"

"You call him Theo for one thing; he objects to it and it is ridiculous; all nicknames are ridiculous."

"All?"

"Yes, all; and abbreviations of names are almost as bad,—I don't see why you should not be called Wilhelmina instead of Bill. It does not suit you, it is true, but I am sure he would prefer it, besides Bill is vulgar; don't you think so yourself?"

"He can call me Wilhelmina if he likes," Bill said in a subdued voice. "And as for Theo, that is easily altered; he can be Gilchrist if he wishes it, though I think it is quite as unsuitable for him as Wilhelmina for me."

"My dear Bill,"—Polly was delighted to have made so much impression—"it is not a question of what you think but of what he wishes. You ought to consider his wishes; you ought to try to please him and consult his tastes; remember, he is proposing to give you a great deal,

and as you can give him nothing in return except a little consideration, it is hardly right to withhold that as you do."

"What do you mean?" Bill's voice, quiet and cold, was almost like that of one who faces an unexpected shock.

Polly, really in her element now, enumerated a list of the things Bill had done wrong, or might have done right, concluding her remarks with,—"Try to be pleasant to him, talk seriously when he wants you to, be cheerful and lively when he is in the humour for it, put on your best dress and try to make yourself look nice when he comes. It is your duty, you know, you owe it to him. Make the most of yourself; don't set him to water the garden and so on, but talk to him and be pleasant."

"Always, do you mean?"

There was something very like consternation in Bill's tone, but Polly did not know it, and answered readily,—"Yes, of course."

"Always!" Bill dropped her hands on the table. "I can't do it," she said vehemently: "it is simply no use, Polly, I can't do it; I shall have to throw it up."

"Throw what up? What do you mean?"

"I can't be respectable always; it is no use trying; he would be sure to find me out after we were married, if not before. He knew the sort of person I was when he asked me to marry him; if he did not like it why did he ask me?"

"You did not call him Theo before you were engaged," Polly said, wisely attacking the details and not the mass of Bill's protest. "And of course," she went on, "people usually expect their *fiancées* will be nice to them. The average girl does it as a matter of course because she wishes to; it is because you do not seem to

know what is expected of you, and never wish to do what is right, that I have had to speak to you."

"It is part of the contract, you think?" Bill asked.

"Certainly not; there is no contract in the matter."

So Polly said, but Bill took her meaning otherwise, as it was intended she should, and there was a long silence. Polly, feeling the subject was closed, rose and moved about the room, while Bill sat lost in thought. At last the younger cousin spoke. "I will try to do what is right," she said, "I will really. I'll write to Theo—to Gilchrist this afternoon, though I did write yesterday. I'll take the letter out on the sands with me."

Polly was very much pleased; here was an obvious sign of repentance, and one moreover which would keep Bill from wading for shrimps, an occupation she herself strongly disapproved of. She set off for the shore that afternoon with a really happy mind; she had settled Bill's affairs, she had arranged for a good tea when she should come in, and the drawing-room family, a great source of annoyance to her, were gone. She felt very well pleased with the world in general and herself in particular as she sat watching Bill writing her letter, a grotesquely and pathetically polite letter it was too, if only she had known it. Polly felt that the stay at Bymouth had been most successful; before she finally left she was even more convinced of this, for while at the little seaside resort she achieved a piece of business which even astonished herself. "Fancy," she used to say with complacency afterwards, "fancy meeting my future landlord at a little place like that!"

But this she did in the person of the old gentleman who came to the drawing-room floor on Tuesday evening. He only arrived on Tuesday,

and Polly left on Thursday; but she made good use of her time and struck up a great friendship with him and his wife, sympathising with their ailments, recommending a butcher, telling them in the course of time something of her own difficulties. They were interested, pleased, favourably impressed. They gave her a good deal of advice,—this she asked for but did not necessarily take; they also eventually gave her a little help,—this she did not ask for but, true to her rule, took without hesitation.

The old gentleman had some house property in London, small houses Bayswater way, "a shrewd investment,"—Polly was sure of it. The tenants had been giving a great deal of trouble lately, "disgraceful,"—Polly was sympathetic. It was a capital place for apartments, and Polly could not do better than settle in that part when she made her "plucky venture;" that was the old gentleman's advice. One of the houses was empty now, and before Polly left on Thursday, she was warmly pressed to take it on the most advantageous terms; that was the old gentleman's offer.

Polly thanked him in her very best manner, saying she doubly appreciated his kindness since she was so much alone in the world. Mr. Brownlow had died during the summer, and Polly said at the time that it was convenient as they were already in mourning; she said it was convenient now, since she was consequently free to conduct her affairs without his advice and criticism. She did not say this to the old gentleman, but told him, after thanking him for his offer, that she must talk it over with her cousins before finally accepting it; adding that she was nearly sure of their approval, quite sure of their obligation on her behalf and their own for his kindness,—and so forth.

Polly was vastly pleased with herself and detailed the whole affair with much satisfaction to the two younger girls as they had a hurried lunch before starting on their walk to Bybridge station. Bella was not at all congratulatory; she did not like having the family affairs discussed with strangers, neither did she like posing as part of Polly's responsibilities.

"I am not," she said, "and I don't see why you should say I am. I am only your cousin and that is no responsibility, and not such a wonderfully near relationship either."

"No," Polly retorted, "not when you are married to a rich man like Jack Dawson and I let lodgings in town for a bare living; the relationship will not be near then I admit," and Polly sniffed.

"I didn't mean that!" Bella cried; "Oh, you are unkind! I don't look down on you and I never shall; it is with your cadging ways that I hate to be mixed up."

"Polly is a born cadger," Bill said resignedly, "and we are part of her stock in trade. She is like a beggar-woman singing in the street and never asking for pennies, but always getting them. I am her hired baby and you are her imitation cough; she would not get on nearly so well without us."

"Well, at all events you reap the benefit of what I get," Polly said.

"Oh, yes," Bill agreed readily.

"And I don't think, Bill, that you will ever despise me." Polly's tone was becoming highly moral. "It is a great comfort to me to think that when you leave me and marry you will never look down on or ignore me. It is true you will never have Bella's temptation, but I am sure you would not do it."

"You are unkind!" Bella repeated. But Bill's face had suddenly hardened; she was thinking of Gilchrist and Wood Hall and the county who

were going to be compelled to recognise him and his wife,—his wife who would have to reform and perhaps forget.

"No," she said suddenly, almost passionately; "I will never forget you, Polly, never look down on you, never, no matter where I am, nor what I become. If I lived in a palace you should come and stay with me; if I married a king he should receive you and take you in to dinner, and all the silly courtiers should bow down to you because you were mine. You are an old fraud, Polly, and a cadger, and a bit of a humbug too, but I am fond of you all the same. We are not swells, you and I, but we will stand by each other, and I will never, never forget!"

"That is a very nice spirit," Polly said impressively and very much through her nose.

"Do you think I would forget?" Bella asked rather hurt. "You seem to think I am a horrid creature."

"No, we don't," Bill answered her, "of course we don't; we know really that you never would be ashamed of your grubby relations. Don't let us talk any more nonsense about it."

So peace was restored, and Polly began cutting slices off the cold shoulder of mutton while the younger girls finished their lunch.

"If you married a king," Bella said to Bill laughing, "he might object to Polly walking up to the palace with a nose-bag of apples sticking out of the middle of her mackintosh."

"Not if he had married me; he would have got used to that sort of thing."

Bella laughed again. "It is a good thing your Theo is not very particular about appearances."

"You don't know very much about Theo," Bill answered quietly.

"I know this much," Bella re-

plied; "he will not let you do just as you like if it happens to be something he does not like and has good reason to think wrong."

"There may be difficulties," Bill admitted with the glimmer of a smile, her war-smile which Polly knew to her cost.

"Bill is very easy to manage when you understand her," that lady said as she sharpened her knife. "Gilchrist will find out how to do it in time; at least he may."

She added the last words under her breath, neither of the others hearing her, for Bella was asking in astonishment: "You would never really oppose a man you loved, would you, Bill?"

Bill debated the question for a moment looking straight before her. "No," she said at last, "I suppose I should not." Then she changed the subject abruptly: "What is that meat for, Polly?"

"To take home with us. I am not going to leave all that good meat behind; there is quite enough now on the bone to look decent, and it would be a great pity to leave all this."

Bella did not approve of this proceeding, but Polly, untroubled by her objections, packed the meat up. "There," she said, giving the parcel a final pat, "it will come in very nicely for our supper when we get home, and I am sure there is quite a lot on the joint still."

Bill examined it gravely. "There is enough for our cat here," she said; "it seems a pity to leave that. Let's take it; we haven't time to scrape it off, but you might put the bone in your hat-box; it would go in if I broke it in half."

"Don't be ridiculous, Bill," Polly said with dignity, "ridiculous and mean. I don't see anything to laugh at, Bella."

Apparently Bella did, but Polly never minded being laughed at, and it was in a friendly fashion that the three cousins started for home. In the main the three agreed admirably; Bella seldom opposed Polly, and Bill, since she had developed an opposing individuality, had been little with them; moreover, she was of a nature with which it was not easy to quarrel. Polly, however, having a respect for her ability to give trouble on occasions, sent her back to Theresa at Ashelton two days after their return to Wrugglesby. "I have got a lot of things to settle," she explained to Bella, "and I can do them better without her."

CHAPTER XXIV.

So Bill was packed off to Ashelton, and then Polly proceeded to settle things to her own complete satisfaction. She saw the house in Bayswater and settled that; she saw the parents of the few pupils remaining to her and settled them very completely; and then she wound up her connection with Wrugglesby with but few difficulties and not a single regret.

"Well, I cannot say I ever cared for it," she said when Bella expressed some natural sorrow at leaving the town which had been her home for nearly seven years. "I never was fitted for a pokey little place like this; I need a wider life."

"It may be pokey," Bella declared with tears in her eyes, "but I like it, and I am sorry to leave it, and to leave the shabby old house and the shabby old furniture."

"We are not leaving the furniture," Polly said quickly. "We are taking all we want with us, and only selling what is of no use to any of us. You and Theresa have each

chosen what you wanted; one can't keep all the rubbish."

The last was added very decidedly, for there had been some discussion about the furniture. Bella had fallen in quietly enough with Polly's judicious arrangements, but Bill, who cherished ridiculous sentiments about old and cumbersome articles of furniture, had disputed Polly's decision article by article, winning sometimes, losing sometimes, and only desisting when it was obvious that the little house at Bayswater could hold no more. All this had taken place during the visits she and Theresa occasionally paid the cousins at Wrugglesby during the time of the settlement. It was all over now, arranged finally some days ago; Polly was only afraid of reopening the question. The three were assembled for the last time at Langford House, Robert having driven Bill to Wrugglesby that afternoon to see the last of the old place and the old associations. There was nothing at all to be done, it was really nonsense for her to come, Polly said, and was not at all surprised that Bill did not arrive till almost dark.

Robert had been delayed in starting, and when Wrugglesby was reached Bill would not be driven to the house, but got down from the dog-cart at the stables and walked, with something clinking forgotten in her pocket, down the familiar streets, saying a silent good-bye. It was a grey, gusty afternoon, the first of October. There were dead leaves in the quiet corners,—all the corners were quiet here—and the wind came now and then whirling them about her feet. It was a good wind, fresh and sweet for all its strength, and the girl felt she loved it; it was the home-wind to her, the wind of the Eastern Counties. And the greyness and the peace and the great sense

of space and abundant room were home to her, the land of the Eastern Counties, not grand at all, but still and wide, and very, very dear.

She stood a moment on the outskirts of the little town looking across the well remembered country. Then she turned and walked home through the small, ill-paved streets, past the familiar shops,—those with the new fronts, those with the old many-paned windows; past the police-station, the Georgian house with the legend *County Police* set over the door; past the church with its ancient burying-ground where, five steps above the town, Aunt Isabel slept under the dark green grass and fluttering sycamore leaves; past genteel houses with small gardens where sunflowers lingered with hollyhocks and dahlias still unhurt by frost; past each familiar thing until at last, just as the lamps in the town were being lighted, Langford House was reached.

But the cousins who received her knew nothing of Bill's lonely walk, nor yet of the something which clinked in her pocket. Indeed, she herself did not think of the last immediately; she did not think of it until after Bella had made the remark on her regret at leaving Wrugglesby. Bill did not speak of her regret, and as for Polly, she had none of which to speak. "As we have got to go some time," she said, "it may as well be now as later; better in fact, for though the lease is not up till Christmas, we could not expect to get such another chance of a house as the one now offered."

To which wisdom Bella assented; after all, leaving the house now did not concern her so very much, for in any circumstances she would have had to leave before the spring, as Jack insisted that they should be married in February. Mrs. Dawson, though she had at first objected to this

arrangement, finally came to the conclusion that since it was inevitable it might as well be soon as late. Indeed after a time she came to accept it with so much meekness (other people called it pleasure) that she invited Bella to come to Greys' when Polly left Wrugglesby and stay there till the winter set in. Therefore Bella, though she assented to them, cannot be said to have had a very personal interest in Polly's plans.

As for Bill, on this particular afternoon she said nothing even with regard to the furniture, except that in reply to Polly's emphatic remark to the effect that they could not take all the rubbish with them, she said she hoped it would get a good home and be well treated. Polly considered such sentiments foolish in the extreme and, having said so, dismissed the subject from her mind and remarked: "I flatter myself that we have done very well on the whole."

Bella agreed, but Bill corrected. "It is not *we* but *you* who have done it. It was you who cadged the house in London on very low terms, you who first impressed Mrs. Dawson with the fact that we are a nice family,—oh yes, she likes Bella for herself now, but she began by liking you, or rather what she takes you to be. You arranged that, just as you arranged the contract for the repairs of this house at the end of the lease. You are a champion cadger, Polly, whatever else you are."

Polly was not certain whether to be pleased or offended by this tribute. "I think you have a great deal to thank me for," she said complacently; "I am glad you appreciate it, though I object to the word *cadger*."

"What shall I say?" Bill asked, "If you don't cadge things what do you do? Acquire them?"

"Well, yes, perhaps I do," Polly

admitted; "yes, I suppose I have the acquisitive faculty."

"I should say you have."

"So have you,"—Polly did not like Bill's tone. "I am sure you have it; people give you things and you don't refuse them."

Bill laughed and went over to the fire-place, the something in her pocket clinking audibly as she moved.

"What is that?" asked the inquisitive Polly.

"Oh, I had forgotten." Bill put her hand into her pocket. "It is something I brought to show you," she said, and drew out first a piece of crumpled paper in which the articles had been wrapped and then two large old-fashioned shoe-buckles.

"What are they?" Polly made a pounce on one.

"Where did you get them?" Bella took the other from the table where Bill had put them. "What are they?"

They gleamed in the fading light as the cousins held them, gleamed and shimmered with wonderful changing splendour, flashing when the firelight touched them and found a dozen answering tongues of flame.

"Paste," Polly said, "old paste; they must be worth a lot of money."

"Diamonds," Bill corrected.

"Diamonds? Nonsense! They might be worth as much as a hundred pounds apiece if they were!"

"They are diamonds," Bill persisted, "though they can't be worth that. They are mine."

"Yours?" Polly almost screamed. "Diamonds—and yours? Talk about the acquisitive faculty!"

Bill flushed. "I did not acquire them," she said rather illogically; "at least, I hated to have them, and I have promised to give them to somebody as a wedding-present, not yet, some day, when there is a wedding. I will give them back,—I don't care

what you say,—you need not think about selling them,—they are not going to be sold."

"Don't talk nonsense to me," was Polly's answer. "If they are diamonds they shall be sold, that is, if you have any right to them, which I am sure you have not. They must be paste!"

Bill took the buckle out of her hand, Bella placing the fellow on the table beside it: "Are they really diamonds?" she asked. "How did you come by them, and whose were they?"

Bill stood looking at them a moment as they flashed in the firelight. "They were Peter Harborough's shoe-buckles," she said.

CHAPTER XXV.

POLLY had no doubt done wisely in sending Bill to Ashelton while she herself was settling affairs at Wruglesby. Not only was she thus freed from Bill's interference, but also Bill had an opportunity for putting into practice her good resolutions regarding Gilchrist Harborough. Polly was sure she would make use of the opportunity, for Bill could always be relied on to keep her word. In the main she fulfilled Polly's expectations; she certainly tried to do so. Theresa found her curiously subdued on her return to Ashelton, and found also that she herself was watched and sometimes imitated with an embarrassing closeness. Bill was trying to be a lady.

She obeyed to the letter Polly's instructions concerning Gilchrist, always putting on her best dress for his coming, never calling him Theo now, never baffling him by tantalising moods and goblin mockery and playful defiance. Indeed so circumspect was her behaviour that Gilchrist not unnaturally concluded that the lecture he had given her after the affair of the plums had taken

effect. Of course he was humanly gratified to find that his words had not been wasted, but it is to be feared that he found Bill in her new character of lady, as copied from Theresa, something of a disappointment; she did not always compare favourably with her model.

Bill did not know how her efforts impressed Gilchrist, neither did she greatly care, for his opinion was not her highest standard. But she was herself by no means satisfied, and one day, soon after her return to Ashelton, she took her difficulties to her friend the rector. He, by right of his office and reason of his experience, had been consulted on many points in his time, some rather peculiar ones since his acquaintance with Bill; but even she had never faced him with anything quite so unexpected as on the day when she brought him the problem of her own behaviour. She was examining the high shelves of his book-case at the time, standing on the back of an arm-chair to do so, having first weighted the seat with encyclopædias.

"THE DIARY OF A LADY," she read the title of one of the books, then stood a moment looking at it thoughtfully. "Monseigneur," she said, "you know I told you I was trying to behave better? Well, I am not getting on a bit."

Mr. Dane was busy with his parish accounts; as a rule the girl's presence did not disturb him at all, but now he looked up, arrested by her tone.

"What is it?" he asked putting down his pen. "What have you been doing?"

"Nothing; I haven't done anything wrong and I do all the right things I can find to do. Theresa thinks I am much improved, but I'm not really." As she reached up to replace the book, the chair tilted a little. "Would you mind kneeling

on the seat?" she said. "The chair tips when I reach up. Thank you."

She jumped to the ground and drawing a chair to the writing-table faced the rector. "What is your notion of a lady?" she asked abruptly.

Mr. Dane considered a moment, before hazarding an opinion, knowing that his answer would be taken literally and perhaps translated into action. "One," he said at length, "who considers others, who never by word or deed causes unnecessary pain, who listens sympathetically, talks pleasantly, never says a great deal even when she feels much or knows more. One who does her mental and moral washing in private, but is not afraid to do her duty in public; who respects the secrets of others, the honour of her family, and her own self more than all. One who speaks with tact, acts with discretion, and places God before fashion without needlessly advertising the fact to the annoyance of the rest of the world."

"Thank you," said Bill, and a long silence followed; perhaps she was learning the definition for her own benefit. At last she spoke again. "You think I could be a lady if I learned to control myself and,—and did not run away when I wanted to, and all those sorts of things?"

Mr. Dane did think so; possibly he did not regard her as so hopeless a case as did Polly. Then there was another silence during which there came the sound of wheels on the drive at the other side of the house. Neither noticed it and Bill, thinking of Polly's lectures on her disreputable appearance, asked a second question. "I suppose a lady always wants to look right? It matters very much how she looks, how she is dressed?"

"It matters very much for some," the rector answered; but others—"

he was only a man after all and though old not altogether wise—"with others," he said, "you are so busy wondering what colour their eyes are that you never notice their gowns; so much perplexed as to what they are, Princess Puck, that you never know what they wear—"

He broke off smiling as the housekeeper opened the door: "A gentleman to see Miss Alardy," she announced.

"Me?" Bill exclaimed.

"Yes, miss; he has been to Haylands, he says, and they told him you were here; he's waiting in the hall now,—young Mr. Harborough."

"Mr. Harborough?" Bill repeated rising. "Whatever can he want?"

"Not Mr. Harborough from Crows' Farm," the housekeeper explained; "young Mr. Harborough from Wood Hall."

"Oh!—I'll come and speak to him."

Ladies controlled themselves; they said nothing even when they felt much; they respected themselves, the honour of their family, the secrets of their friends. Bill was going to be a lady, and she would not even allow herself to feel surprised.

Mr. Dane took up his pen again. Old Mr. Harborough was worse no doubt; he had been ill all the week, and that it was a mere question of days everyone knew. Probably it was a question of hours now, and for that reason they had summoned the heir. And for what reason had the heir come for Bill? If old Mr. Harborough had a fancy for seeing her again before he died Mr. Dane was not the man to gainsay him. Bill knew that, the instant he came into the hall where she stood with Kit Harborough.

"Go, by all means," was his advice, "go at once; I will explain to Mrs. Morton."

So Bill fetched her hat from the study where it lay on the encyclopædias and without another word drove away with Kit to Wood Hall. And Mr. Dane had time to finish his accounts and then explain matters to Theresa before lunch.

Theresa was very much surprised to hear of Bill's going, but since the rector approved she was quite willing to do the same. As the afternoon wore on and Bill did not return, she began to wonder a little what the girl was doing; and when in the evening Gilchrist called and Bill was still absent, she found the situation rather awkward. Gilchrist showed such an unreasonable displeasure at her absence that Theresa wished Mr. Dane could have explained to the impatient lover the propriety and justice of Bill's going. To tell the truth Gilchrist was both displeased and anxious, for he did not feel at all sure what Bill might be saying with regard to the Wood Hall estate. She had told him how she had met and warned Kit Harborough at By-mouth; and though it is true that she had listened with commendable humility to his natural explosion of anger, and at the end had assured him (with the shadow of contempt in her voice) that the heir had declined to take advantage of the warning, what guarantee was there that she might not, for some reason of her own, think fit to warn the old man in time to create unnecessary complications? Gilchrist was very uneasy indeed, not at all sure what Bill would do.

But Kit had no doubts at all. He was perfectly sure she would say nothing; and, as certain of her as he was of himself, he never once during the drive to Gurnett reopened the question of the claim. He never even mentioned it when he helped her to alight at the great door, never spoke

of it or referred to it as he led her across the echoing hall to the wide stairs and the rooms above.

Old Harborough was dying, but dying elegantly, almost as if with a subtle and unconscious recollection of what was due to the traditions of his family. He was powerless in body but terribly alert in mind, keenly conscious of the situation and accepting the inevitable with the cynicism he had shown to so many of the happenings of his life, neither curious nor afraid, politely indifferent, almost politely sceptical. Bill, the many-sided, the sympathetic, felt something like a touch of admiration for this survival of a passing type. He, on his part, feeble as he was, still received her with something of his former mocking courtesy, thanked her for troubling to come to him, apologised for the manner of her reception, and prayed her to be seated.

There was a nurse present when Bill entered the room, a tall, quiet woman who looked curiously at the girl. The man who had met Mr. Harborough with the chair that April day in the woods was also present; but he did not look curiously at Bill, either because he thought it bad manners, or else because he understood her claim to his master's interest. Both of them, however, withdrew to a more distant part of the large room. Kit remained standing near the bed, but Mr. Harborough took no notice of him, only once indirectly acknowledging his presence and then in no pleasant manner; it was when he himself apologised to Bill for not handing her to a chair.

"You must take the will for the deed," he said, "since I cannot do it; it is clear such trifling attentions will not survive the old generation."

He did not look at Kit, nevertheless the lad coloured hotly. Bill sat

down, wondering a little how the old manners would suit the new generation; but she did not say so and in a minute she dropped the thought out of her mind, turning her entire attention on Mr. Harborough. She did not find it difficult to talk to him, even though Kit was a listener, even when the old man referred to her last visit and the offer then made she felt little embarrassment.

"Are you not sorry you did not take it?" he asked her. "I'd have left you Wood Hall for as long as you remained a Harborough. Pity it was not done! It might have saved the old place; an heiress isn't always the only thing or the best thing to mend a broken family." He seemed almost to be speaking to himself, but he addressed her directly when he asked abruptly: "Are you not sorry you did not take it? By this time to-morrow it would all have been yours."

"I don't want it," she answered him vehemently. "I don't want it; I would hate to have it!"

"Hate to have it? Why, I thought you liked it?"

"I do, so much that I would hate to have it."

A priest had come quietly into the room, but, seeing Mr. Harborough engaged in conversation, he went to a distant window and opened a book he carried. Bill recognised him at once for the same man who had read the mass at Ashelton Church. Mr. Harborough followed her eyes but, not being aware that she recognised him, thought she was only wondering as to the reason of his presence.

"The last relic of the Catholic faith here," he explained in his weak harsh voice. "I have to be dressed for the next world, the last of us who ever will be. Kit is not a Catholic; he is a Purist or a Deist or something sincere and modern.

He troubles about his soul and his Creator like any other mental dyspeptic, and believes something on his own account. When I was young it was thought ill-bred to interfere with the concerns of the Almighty, and the minding of souls was left to those who were paid to do it. We were not tied down by a Sunday-school morality in those days, and we had the courage of our convictions."

Bill nodded. "I know," she said.

"How do you know?" he asked sharply.

"By you," she answered.

"By me? What have I said to you? What do you know?"

"I can't exactly explain," she said doubtfully; "only the world was different then. One can't measure you by the people of to-day, nor the people of to-day by you."

He fixed her with eyes which were still keen. "How do you know that?" he persisted.

"I don't know; I suppose I feel it."

"You are a lenient judge," he said almost softly, "about the most lenient judge I have ever had, you odd child. What an odd child! I did not know how odd the day I found you in the wood, the day you found God in the wood; you did find Him, did you not?"

"Yes," she answered simply. "He seemed very close; but then I think the devil was too."

"God and the devil at your right elbow and your left. A survival of Puritan days,—to find God in the woods now!"

The tone was not wholly mocking; there was a touch of wistfulness in it, and Bill hearing it answered it from the depth of her own convictions. "Everywhere it is beautiful one feels God," she said softly, "in forest and sea and sky." She raised her eyes and met Kit's. He may

have been guilty of a Sunday-school morality; he certainly was guilty of a belief, and he betrayed its existence then to one who shared it.

But Mr. Harborough did not know it; he was not thinking of Kit at all as he lay looking curiously at the girl. His lips moved once: "Shall see God," he said as if to himself, then raising his voice slightly he asked: "Who is it that shall see God, Father Clement?"

The priest turned. "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God," he answered drawing nearer.

"The pure in heart," Mr. Harborough repeated, "that is it; I had forgotten. Well, little witch, you have seen something that I, for all my years and experience, have not; something that I—I suppose because of those years and experience—cannot see. But now I must ask you to go; there is a heavenly toilet to be made. Go down and get some lunch, but come back by-and-bye. Kit must take you; I apologise for him beforehand."

Bill rose. "Kit does not need anyone's apology," she said hotly; then she followed the young man out of the room feeling ashamed.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Kit that day was like the Kit of Bymouth, the Kit she had met in the lane; there did not seem such a gulf between them as when they parted, nor yet such terrible courtesy. They were boy and girl in the great house together, boy and girl watching together, by an odd chain of circumstances, for the coming of the great shadow. They went to the solemn old dining-room and lunched in state as Bill had once lunched with Mr. Harborough. During the meal Kit did not mention to his guest the subject which had never really been

absent from his mind since she herself first put it there that morning on the sands at Bymouth. A little while back he had had some talk with a solicitor of his acquaintance, and without betraying a personal interest in the test-case he described, had learned the very serious position of the man placed as he was. But he did not speak of it to Bill then, although, in spite of the still intangible nature of it all, he felt the shadow of this man from the new country spread over the stately old house, filling its most secret corners, taking possession of its most sacred spots. And Bill, though he did not speak of it, knew the thought that was in her companion's mind, and felt with him this haunting presence.

After lunch the doctor and nurse agreed in forbidding either Kit or his guest to see the patient before four o'clock, saying that they should be summoned then unless some unexpected change made their presence necessary earlier. There were nearly two hours before them, two hours for Kit to play host in the house which might soon pass to another. With an effort he tried to banish the thought from his mind as he asked Bill to come to the library.

"This is the room I like best," he said when they stood in the great low room where some past Harborough had gathered a store of books. Mercifully the later comers, not thinking them of sufficient value to sell, had left them intact, even, indeed, adding a volume now and then, each man according to his taste, for there was no lack of intellect even among the wildest of them. The September sunlight slanted through the broad low windows where weedy sunflowers and uncut trails of late-blooming roses looked in on a big room, irregular in shape, full of angles, with bookshelves jutting out

in unexpected places, and a silence in it which was a luxury of the brain. The light was a warm brown gloom cast back from book-lined shelves; the smell was the wonderful, indescribable smell of an old library, Russia leather, and oak shelves, and book-dust blended into one, a perfume never to be forgotten. For, as the rose on his mistress's bosom to a lover, or the breath of the clover which filled the air when he pledged his vows, so is the smell of such a library to the man of books, and above all, to the man who has been reared to it, the man who has learned by common use and childish association to love the outside of the volumes or ever he could read them within.

Bill felt her breast heave suddenly, and a great lump came in her throat. She had never been in such a library before, never to her knowledge smelt its sweet familiar smell, yet her breast heaved and she could not speak. It was absurd, of course; it was nothing to her, the books were not her friends, and as an alien she could claim no kinship with them; yet she felt for them, felt so that she could not speak. As for Kit, he had followed her into the room and stretched out a hand to set straight a book on a lower shelf, but he did not touch it; his hand dropped and he turned abruptly to a window, and for a long minute both stood silent, not regarding one another. Then Bill mastered herself with an effort.

"What is this?" she asked, taking a book at random.

It was Sir Thomas Browne's *VULGAR ERRORS*, an old folio edition with wonderful woodcuts. Kit looked at it for a moment, though he knew it well enough, and then recovering himself he told her. They took the book to the broad window-sill and together turned its pages, looking at

the curious pictures. After that he took down another book and then another; Bill was sitting on the window-sill now, the books piled beside her, while Kit drew a great wooden chair in front. In this way he showed her a Chaucer massively bound and clamped with brass, a Pope of 1717, a *PILGRIM'S PROGRESS* grotesquely illustrated,—the books he loved, wonderful old German prints, poets of a later date, and stout old sermon-writers with whose solid works he had built houses in childish days.

So the afternoon passed with strange pleasure to both, though neither quite forgot the shadow that hung over the house, nor the even deeper shadow not only of death, that brooded over the library and in some unexplained way touched every book they looked at and every passage they read. Once Kit took down a Milton, old and shabby and unopened, except by himself, for many years, and began to read a passage from *IL PENSIEROSO*.

"Oft on a plat of rising ground
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some well watered shore,
Swinging slow—"

He stopped abruptly; each heard the curfew as on that night, each smelt the scent of the wet grass in the lane. There was a pause when neither looked at the other; then he went on hurriedly, a little lower down the page:

"Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers through the room
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom—"

Kit shut the book sharply and gave it up. All round him lay the heaped up volumes as they used to lie on the winter afternoons when he had built towers with the works of the divines in that same glowing gloom. He

glanced at the wide fireplace; Bill had glanced at it before him, because she too had thought of it, though she had never seen it when the fire burned low at twilight. So they each looked, and then each looked at the other and neither, for all their resolutions, hid the thought nor pretended to hide it. Bill's throat began to swell again. A volume of Hooker, balanced on the window-sill, fell with a thud to the floor. Kit took a long time in picking it up, and when at last he put it in a place of safety with Marcus Aurelius on the top, he said: "He would love the books."

It was perfectly unnecessary to explain who *he* was; Bill knew and thought of Gilchrist's tastes and book-shelf before she answered: "Yes, I think he would." She picked up the *MEDITATIONS*. "He has got this," she said; "his is in English, though, bound in green cloth, and cost one and sixpence. I believe he would like his own edition better; it is cheaper and clearer."

Kit silently took the imperial philosopher from the girl's hand, as she got down from the window-seat and helped him to put the books back in their places. Neither spoke of Gilchrist again; and a little later someone came to fetch them to Mr. Harborough.

They went up-stairs together and quietly into the old man's room. Bill noticed a difference directly she entered; she needed no one to tell her that she had been called to say good-bye to the eccentric old man she had so little known.

"Come here," he said hoarsely when he saw her hesitate near the door.

She came and stood close to him, Kit standing on the other side of the bed.

"Here's a keepsake for you," he whispered, trying to raise his nerveless hand. "I give it you in the pre-

sence of witnesses," he glanced at the nurse as he spoke, "so there will be no dispute afterwards. It is not an heirloom, and I can do with it as I like. Put your hand on mine, take it, here."

Bill put her hand in his as requested and the cold powerless fingers beneath her warm touch fumbled feebly before the two glittering buckles fell into her hand.

"There," he said triumphantly, "they are for you; that is, if you will do me the favour of accepting them."

"For me?" she said gazing half bewildered, half fascinated by the brilliancy of the stones.

"Yes, for you," Mr. Harborough told her. "They are yours now, the gift is witnessed," he went on for she hardly seemed to realise the fact. Then she stooped and kissed the hand that gave them.

"They were Peter Harborough's shoe-buckles," he whispered, "about the only thing he did not lose at cards; he lost everything else even including—" there was a little cough for breath—"including his life. My father left them to me; they are my own; I can do with them as I like, and I like to give them to you. They are all the diamonds we have now and," addressing Kit with a sudden access of spite, "no wife of yours can have them now."

Bill dropped the buckles as if they had burnt her; they fell with a clink on the counterpane and lay there, a sparkle of light. "I can't take them," she said. "I won't have them; you, —you don't understand."

Kit leaned across and, picking them up, gently gave the buckles back to her. He did not speak, but there was something in his manner she could not resist.

"That's right," the old man muttered as if he had not fully understood. "They are yours, little witch;

he can't take them; I have given them to you."

Bill grasped them in silence, pressing the sharp stones into her flesh.

"Now good-bye," Harborough said more clearly, "good-bye, or shall we say *au revoir*?" His breath failed him for a moment but he recovered himself and went on cynically. "I have to go through with this business, and being new to it I may bungle. In case I do not die decently I would rather not disgrace myself in the presence of a lady."

So Bill said good-bye and went out. Kit opened the door for her, and shutting it after her, left her standing alone outside. So she stood a moment, like one in a dream, the diamonds still pressed into her flesh; then she turned and went with slow steps down the stairs, with quickening steps across the hall to the open door, and so out into the garden where the afternoon shadows were long and the tender warmth of September lay over everything. She followed the terraced path awhile, and then, her steps still quickening, crossed the lawn where the grass was emerald green and the elm leaves lay scattered here and there. She was almost running now, quite running when she came to the shrubbery, running at full speed, running blindly, wildly, faster and faster until she reached the wood and flung herself down in the waist-deep bracken and sobbed as if her heart would break.

It was much later when Kit found her, knowing perhaps where to look for her. She had told him of her first ramble in the wood; at any rate when all was over, he found her under the yellowing beeches half hidden among the ferns. She started when she heard his step beside her, and at first was minded to pretend she had not been crying and practise a belated self-control. But she did not, chiefly

because he did not pretend; he made no pretence of anything, nor yet behave in the manner expected of him and worthy of his breeding. He sat down beside her without speaking, whereupon she obstinately buried her face in the bracken and would not so much as look up though the stiff fern-stalks pricked her neck. She moved her head uneasily and he gently broke a stalk away; in doing so his hand came in contact with her hair, a little curl of which, having become loosened, had contrived to get wet with tears. The contact with it, and the recognition that it was wet with tears, were things Kit did not soon forget; but he drew his hand away and only said stupidly: "Don't cry, please don't cry; I didn't know you cared about him like that."

"He was good to me"—Bill's voice was muffled by the ferns—"but it isn't exactly that."

He had not been good to Kit, yet Kit felt vaguely grieved and shocked by his death; he looked in some perplexity at the girl beside him. "What is it then?" he asked, but she did not answer so he fell back on his first remark and entreated her not to cry any more.

"I shall," she answered without looking up. "I have not cried half enough yet,—there are so many things.—I haven't nearly done."

Kit glanced rather hopelessly at the half buried figure. "Are you going to cry for them in order?" he asked attempting to smile.

"Yes."

Nevertheless Bill, with the sunny lights coming back to her eyes, sat up rustling the dead leaves as she did so. "I wonder if the wood will be cut down," she said wistfully, as she glanced up at the interwoven branches above her.

"No," Kit told her, "for neither you nor I would allow it."

"I?"

"Yes; if it is not mine it will be yours, or as good as yours."

"Mine?"

"Yes; if it is Theo's—you said you were going to marry him—it will be yours too, and I am glad."

"Glad! I am not."

Her voice was passionate, almost vindictive, and Kit went on quickly: "I am glad, and you ought to be too. You said once that, were you in my place, you would do anything to get Wood Hall; surely you ought not to mind if you have it."

"I'm not in your place," Bill said, "and I don't want it a bit. Do anything to get it! A woman can't do anything but be married. I don't want Theo to have it, and I don't want to come here."

She buried her face in the ferns again, but now she did not cry. Kit broke the stiff fern-stalk into little pieces, and as he threw them away caught sight of the buckles shining among the ferns near the girl's arm. Bill heard them clink as he picked them up, and sat up again, facing him now with a calm determination. "I am not going to have them," she said quietly.

"You must; you can't help yourself. They were given to you, and you must have them," and he dropped them in her lap.

"I am not going to have them," she repeated; "had he known, he would not have given them to me."

"No, because very probably they would have come to you in any case; I don't know how such things go, but it is likely they would have come to you. At all events they are yours beyond dispute now."

"Mine, not my husband's?"

"Certainly, yours absolutely."

"Mine to do with as I like?"

The sense of ownership seemed to please the girl. Kit wondered why a little, but he did not ask and her

next words explained. "Then I can give them to whom I please! I shall give them to your wife on her wedding-day."

Bill put the rejected buckles in her pocket, but Kit said quietly: "That you will never do, for I shall never marry."

(To be continued.)

THE NEW ART.

ART and archaeology are pursuits commonly associated together, in programmes and prospectuses at all events; but artist and archaeologist are always, because temperamentally, at odds. There is on the one side the man of science, who would have art dependent upon learning, and on the other the man of skill, who claims to be free of the past and all its works. If either of them can be said to be in the right, it is only from his own narrow point of view; but each in turn prevails over popular opinion, to the exclusion of the other. A generation or so ago it was the man of learning who preached that art was not art unless it was a revival of the past. Just now it is the man unlearned who will have no dealings with the past; for him it is dead.

Dead as it may seem, the seed of the future is in it; and the idea of a New Art, of which we hear so much, is as far from possible realisation as that of the Gothic Revival, which we have outlived. We see now, in the light of a new century, how foolish was the flirtation between art and archaeology, how hopeless the entanglement, how impossible any lasting tie between them. What more tedious to us than the perfunctory attempts at antiquarian art which in their day made such a stir in the world?

So long as there are men whose hearts are in the past, the past will be reflected in their art. It is not with them a question of choice, but of necessity; they go the way of their bent; they cannot help it, and no chiding of ours will turn them from it. Indeed it is not our affair but

theirs, the condition on which they give us of their best is, that they be allowed to work with free hands. They are no less free to bring archaeology to bear upon their art than we are to leave it out of ours. The mistake was ever to insist upon medievalism, ever to impose upon the latter part of the nineteenth century the style of ages gone. It could but lead to insincerity and affectation. So lifeless seems to us already the work, or most of it, done in the name of the Gothic Revival, that we find ourselves doubting if it can ever have been alive. The art of here and there an artist, living, as it were, back in the Middle Ages and imbued with their poetry, may last; the rest is already lumber.

The question now is whether, in the violence of reaction against the enforced adoption of some historic style, we may not have gone too far in the direction of a new style, as it is called, which in reality is no more representative of us than medievalism was representative of our fathers. The present temper is to break abruptly with tradition, and to dismiss from our minds all thought of what has till now been done. As though we could! As though to-day were not the direct consequence of yesterday! This mood cannot last. There is not much to choose between the folly of never looking back for direction and the foolishness of looking only behind us. It is idle to pretend that the present is, or can be, or should be, independent of the past, even of the distant past. Grant the undue preponderance of medieval influence upon Victorian art,

and the absurd degree to which antiquarian considerations were allowed to prevail over æsthetic, it were almost better to make no protest against this scientific blunder than, by protesting against it, to countenance the notion that the study of the best that has been done in art is anything less than essential to our doing the best it is in us to do. The absurd theory of our modern self-sufficiency is absurdly modern. A short generation ago no man would have been rash enough to propound it.

At the root of the new movement is the spirit not merely of revolution but also of anarchy. It is not harsh laws that are defied by the New artist; he will abide no law. It is not a given way he declines to go; he is bent on straying. Small blame to the man who refuses to be tethered to the signpost; but why not avail oneself of the roads? Possibly they may have been worn here and there into ruts,—which may be a reason for leaving them awhile, but not for long; the best, the safest, and the quickest way proves always in the end to be some trodden track.

True, there has been far too much dogmatism as to which is the right way. "All roads lead to Rome"; yes, but it has not yet become proverbial that the way to get there is to wander, according to the mood of the moment, over hill and waste where not a foot-track is to be seen. That may lead to all manner of pleasant places, but not to a fixed destination. Were it not wiser of the artist who knows where he wants to go, and means to get there, to follow for the first part of his journey at least, perhaps for a long way on it, the road, the high road even, and so save his strength for the toils of that portion of the way which he will necessarily have to explore for himself? The mistake of pedantry has been to insist

upon one only way, whereas, such is the personal quality of art, so much does it depend upon a man's temperament, that a road demonstrably the shortest is not for everyone the surest and most expeditious. Each must choose his own path, and is himself the best judge as to which that may be; so much of freedom is necessary to the spontaneous exercise of art, but no one nowadays denies an artist that right; the danger is no longer lest freedom be restricted, but lest licence go without restraint. The time when some historic style, imposed by authority, lay like a weight upon the individuality of the artist is past, and well past; what weighs upon it now is the pretended style of to-day. The past is dead; and from its ashes there is arisen the New Art, the art that is to be, the art which each man thinks to evolve for himself out of himself.

This New Art is nothing if not original. And yet, so fearful is it of its own originality, so mistrustful of its individuality, that it will look neither to the right nor to the left; still less dare it on any account look back, lest somehow the virgin purity of its vision be sullied. And all the while it is unconscious of the images reflected from every side, images which, whatever may at first have been the piquancy of their most strange distortion, are by this time the very commonest property of design, with the least pretensions to be (according to its own elegant phraseology) up-to-date.

So it happens that the new originality ends always in the same sort of thing, though not one genius of them all doubts for a moment that his art expresses his own most personal idea, or suspects that his favourite swirl is indeed nothing but the unconscious reproduction of forms which begin already to be as hacknied as those

of any orthodox period. If only they were half as beautiful! The Greek fret becomes at last tiresome by perpetual repetition, but how soon we tire of the new meander! And it is not in ornament alone that we are determined to be new. Think of it! we rebel against the authority of the Parthenon,—only to submit to the sway of the Poster! The fashion is to seek, instead of beauty, novelty. But the New Art is not so new as its exponents think; and the idea underlying it is no newer than the forms it takes, though we work it nowadays for all that it is worth, as the saying is, or more than it is worth, and worry a notion to death in a shorter time than was ever done before. There is no more individuality (nowadays less indeed) in looking round about you for inspiration than in looking backwards, in looking downwards than in looking upwards. It is no sign of independence to avoid the purest sources, and for no better reason than that they are known.

The bigoted demand for antiquity in modern art came from the study; the frivolous demand for novelty comes from the shop. The recommendation of the newest thing, and the idea that it has something to recommend it, come to us from across the counter.

Was there ever, apart from the salesman's point of view, a more preposterous conception than that of a New Art? As though we were not still and always the children of the past! As though the artist were not what he is through those who went before him! As though he did not begin with inheritances (possibilities as well as disabilities) for which he is in no wise responsible! The true meaning of invention is the strict one, something not all ours, but which we find and make our own.

Man's imagination is no blank

sheet upon which at his maturity personal fancies and emotions write themselves. Before ever he begins to feel or think for himself time prints upon its sensitive surface images deliberately to be effaced only by effort not worth the while, seeing how much there is in these traces of the past which he may turn to personal, nay, to original account. A man of real initiative arrives at absolutely original results even though he may take for his starting-point the thing which has been done. What paralyses individuality is only to accept it as an end. Novelty itself is by rights the result of changing conditions; it comes naturally of our accepting them; and the craving for a new style is about as reasonable as the hankering after an old one. Between adopting an old formula and manufacturing a new one, the choice is only a choice of evils.

We vex ourselves to little purpose about style. It does not come by conscious effort. Sober workmen, intent on their work and not thinking about it, are all the while building it up. From time to time we note a stage of progress and call it perhaps new. Only in so far as art ever new.

All unconsciously some man, stronger than the rest and more consummate master of his craft, asserts his individuality, and, not of masterfulness aforethought, but simply because he is a master, imposes it upon his fellows, who become his followers, work in his manner, echo him; and so he sets a fashion, and a style is formed. There comes in time another strong personality, and a new style arises. Thus fashions change even without the aid of trade whose business it is to foster them, even to foist them upon us. And who shall judge them? This much at least may be taken as certain, that of all fashions the one least safe to follow is the last

new fashion, the one, that is to say, which has not yet stood the test of time, the one which is so near to us that we do not see it in perspective, the one which a haze of popularity magnifies out of all just appreciation.

And yet the cunning pedlar of to-day has only to cry "New lamps for old," and, as in the mythical past when young Aladdin gave away his talisman, we vie in eagerness to yield up, in exchange for trash, traditions of design artistically above price.

For the student, it is of his age to be carried along with the current; he has this excuse for ignoring the past, that he really knows nothing of it. The more the pity; and the more the blame to his teachers, their plain duty being to guide him in the right path, little attraction as it may have for him, and the less it attracts him the more persistently to point it out. For the cunning purveyor of novelty, it is his trade to make much of a new commodity. But for the men who know or ought to know, what are we to think of them when they are caught by the cry, when the appointed guardians of art-teaching acclaim the latest upstart eccentricity and hail it for the newest art? Yet it has come to this, that the powers responsible for the conduct of our great storehouse of practical and industrial art have so far yielded to the temptation of the moment as to remove from their place of honour in the national museum masterpieces of Renaissance cabinet-work and carving to make room for the ultimate expression of fantastic extravagance in French furniture-design, and to cover up priceless tapestries with designs about on a level with the street poster, even with the very advertisement sheets themselves. It is significant that the new form of decorative figure-design accepts the poster for its standard. That is perhaps a new

idea. As for the ever-recurring swirl of line which does duty for new ornament, it resolves itself at its best into something so like the *rocaille* of Louis Quinze that one is disposed to greet it as an old friend,—or enemy, as the case may be. It is not denied that good work may take at times the incoherent form which we identify as the New Art; it is merely asserted that the best in the New Art is not that which is new, and the newest in it is the reverse of good.

In truth the value of the new endeavour is that it endeavours. There are signs in it of life and energy. It promises something; and courage counts for much, even the courage to go astray. In the way of accomplishment it has little to show, nothing certainly to compare with the art which in a remote or recent past has earned the admiration of artists; and to give it a place among the treasures of the nation is at once to place it in a false light, and, by recognition at the best premature, to stifle what promise there may be in it.

Regarded as the outlet of youthful restlessness, its extravagance may pass; as the serious expression of mature art it lacks coherence, sober sense, and sanity. If this is what comes of avoiding the path of precedent and turning a deaf ear to the voice of tradition, what further proof is needed to show how absolutely necessary it is to an artist that he should know what has been done before and how it has been done?

The theory is, that nature is enough, that an artist has only to look at her and she will guide him in the right path,—but there is absolutely no shadow of a reason why nature should point out the way of art. In relying wholly upon nature the artist is no better advised than in trusting altogether to art. The New Art, indeed, cannot be said to breathe

the spirit of nature; but professed allegiance to nature does not lead always to natural results. It has resulted before now in ornament more suggestive of railway-signals than of any natural growth; it has resulted also in the New Art; at least, its votaries take shelter under the name of nature. And, until now, it has hardly been denied that the artist, study nature as he may, and as he must, is bound to study the methods of art also, aye, and the works of artists before him; or, admirably as he may do, he will fall short of his possible achievement. The sincere artist seeks always the best, not the newest expression of his personality.

A new art impatient to break with the old, merely because it is old, proclaims itself *parvenu*. It is all very well at a time like the turn of the century to take stock of art; but, in dismissing as old stock anything in the nature of last season's goods, we act like men of business merely. To an artist the true criterion is beauty.

The new century affects to believe that whatever is established is already out of date; but then the century is very young. It will arrive, in its turn, at the knowledge that art has no age, and that the pursuit of novelty is the oldest of illusions.

LEWIS F. DAY.

FRANCESCO CRISPI.

Up to the first days of May, 1860, Garibaldi entertained grave doubts as to the possible success of the expedition into Sicily. Moreover, the natural inclination which he felt to succour Nice, his birthplace, and to prevent, even with force, its annexation by France, made him hesitate, while a long cherished dream led him to prefer the Eternal City, as a gift to United Italy, rather than Sicily, where the insurrections of Bagheria and Palermo had already been sternly repressed.

Crispi saw all his carefully prepared plans threatened with destruction. For it was Crispi who had now succeeded in obtaining from the Piedmontese government, which had expelled him from Turin a few years previously, more than a sympathetic neutrality, a veritable support. It was he who persuaded the Milan Revolutionary Committee to furnish the necessary arms, and inspired Garibaldi with confidence in his epic project. But the General still hesitated, remembering the unfortunate expeditions of Murat, of the brothers Bandiera, of Pisacane, who had been shot down almost immediately after setting foot on the land which Crispi asserted to be ripe for insurrection and anxious to embrace the cause of its liberators. Nevertheless, a few days before his interview with Garibaldi, Francesco Crispi had hired a small sailing-vessel, and, landing in Sicily, had secretly visited the principal centres of the island, where a sentence of death hung over him like a sword of Damocles. He had found the most daring and ardent

partisans of his revolutionary plans discouraged and afraid to organise an uprising against the forty thousand men of the Bourbon army. At last Garibaldi, tortured by his doubts and indecision between Rome and Nice, after having walked up and down his room in a fever of uncertainty, turned abruptly on Crispi, and asked him almost fiercely: "Do you render yourself responsible to me for Sicily?"

Crispi calm and assured, replied:

"Yes, General."

"On your life?"

"On my life."

"Take care; I show no mercy to those who deceive me."

"If I deceive you, you may do what you like with me."

"All right; then we shall start."

This is how Francesco Crispi sums up the rapid events of the following months in his diary.

On the 5th of May we sailed from Quarto; on the 11th we landed at Marsala; on the 15th we won the battle of Calatafimi; on the 27th we made our entry into Palermo, which was at once evacuated by the enemy; on the 22nd of July we triumphed at Milazzo; on the 7th of September we entered Naples, and finally on the 1st of October, by the victory of the Volturno, we swept away the last vestiges of the Bourbon's throne.

Had Crispi answered Garibaldi's brow-beating questions with less assurance, had he not offered his life as the guarantee of his statements, had he, in a word, not been possessed of that boundless confidence in himself which always distinguished him, it is certain that the nineteenth cen-

tury would not have witnessed one of the noblest episodes of the epic of the Risorgimento.

His deeply-rooted and unlimited self-confidence was the principal reason of Francesco Crispi's popular success. It was this boundless confidence in his own powers which rendered him almost unconscious of danger and gave him courage to run the greatest risks, as, for instance, when he secretly visited Sicily with the borrowed names of Manuel Pereda and Tobia Glivaje to prepare the insurrection, or when, as Prime Minister, he accepted Bismarck's invitation to Friedrichsruhe merely to show Europe that Italy was not afraid to defy France. Even when he was forced to relinquish the reins of power, crushed by the military disaster of Adowa, this exaggerated individual sentiment prevented Crispi from adequately appreciating his share of responsibility in the terrible disaster, which caused more victims than all the wars of the Italian Independence. And when the Radical party of the Chamber of Deputies covered him with execration and abuse his only answer to their indignant shouts was: "Whenever Italy shall need me, she may count upon me." Even in the face of the disaster, in an atmosphere of dismay and discouragement, Crispi felt the necessity of re-affirming his great personality, in order to reassure the weak and timid and to prove to sceptics that Italy could still boast of one great man. Like Louis the Fourteenth, Crispi felt himself really superior to all other men, and in affirming this superiority there was so much confidence and evident self-belief that he actually avoided falling into ridicule.

This exaggerated individual sentiment manifested itself in Crispi under the guise of a powerful will and of great courage. It was thanks to

these two qualities that he succeeded in imposing himself upon the mass of the Italians, who are precisely lacking in them. For although the Italians as a people are intelligent, their intelligence is cold and sceptical; they are indolent, moreover, avoiding hard work, and becoming easily tired after a long suspense. The average Italian, therefore, gladly accepts a sort of social Buddhism which keeps him away from political struggles. During forty years, if we except the Radical movement now taking place, the masses have never taken a lively interest in any social or political question, and the Italian Parliament has never represented in reality any section of public opinion. A man possessing Crispi's courage and power of will finds no difficulty in imposing himself on a sceptical and apathetic mass, having no ideas of its own to uphold. At one time, indeed, it could have been said without exaggeration that Crispi had become a veritable Dictator in Italy. The Parliamentary opposition to his government had almost completely disappeared, and when, during his second term of office, the Opposition rose against him and became comparatively active, Crispi violated with impunity all parliamentary rights, proroguing the sessions and dissolving Parliament without offending public opinion or giving rise to any manifestation or protest.

Crispi is not an Italian type, his tendencies and characteristics being, indeed, quite opposed to it. In his exaggerated sentiment of individuality we see reproduced a type which is very common in Sicily, where this hypertrophy of personality indicates great energies and explains the daring, the love of adventure, and the rapid resolutions which are characteristics of the islanders. But the Sicilian often lacks the analytic

faculty and the positive sense, because he does not possess modern culture. Crispi had a veritable cult for the Sicilian philosopher Empedocles, and used to say that compared with him even Kant, Hegel, or Hartmann are unimportant. In the Sicilian what prevails is the worship of force which is suggested by his surroundings, by nature, by legend, and by history itself. Etna with its fantastic eruptions and with its earthquakes which destroy whole cities, the semi-tropical sun and vegetation, such historical memories as the battle of Hymera, the Giants' Temple at Agrigentum, the tyrants Cleander, Panctius, and Phalaris, the bells which gave the signal of the insurrection against the French, and all the epic struggles of the islanders against the invaders who came like birds of prey from Africa, Asia, and Europe; all these are memories which go far towards forming the Sicilian character.

Crispi was one of the highest manifestations of the psychological characteristics peculiar to the Sicilian. One of the most general accusations against him is that, even when a minister, he remained the conspirator that he was between 1848 and 1860. But the charge is false. Crispi remained what he was even before 1848; he remained what the social and historic *milieu* had made him, a worshipper of that spirit of power which, repressed by bondage and civilisation, has transformed itself into a revolutionary and conspiring spirit. The whole social movement of modern times, even in its most rational manifestations, was always regarded by Crispi as a conspiracy and explained in the lights of his vast and deep, but exclusively classical, culture. For instance, he attributed the Sicilian riots of 1893, which were the result of misery and

hunger, to a Franco-Russian conspiracy having for its object to deprive Italy of its most fertile island. The solemn denunciation of this imaginary conspiracy from his seat in the Chamber of Deputies, where he also declared that he had documents to prove its existence, brought upon him an avalanche of ridicule. Again, Crispi attributed the socialist movement which had its centre in Milan to the separatist tendencies of Lombardy. On another occasion, always judging from his classical point of view, he defined Socialism as a return to the Communism of Sparta. Crispi, therefore, was a characteristic instance of that Sicilian type so common in the *Terre Promise* of Paul Bourget, and of which Giorgio Arcoleo, who has carefully analysed it, says: "They live to-day, but they think as if a century ago." Crispi was still so powerfully under the influence of the social *milieu* in which he was born, that, having been away from it for nearly sixty-five years, he still made use of the Sicilian dialect in private conversation.

It was from that cult of power that Crispi derived the conception of a greater Italy, politically and militarily strong. He shared the error of all those who contributed in building up modern Italy, men who, like Cavour, Bonghi, and Minghetti, had a wide economic culture, but thought that Italy, being a naturally rich country, could undertake the most expensive enterprises with impunity. Even so late as the electoral campaign of 1890 Crispi still upheld this theory. When he became Prime Minister the Budget of the State was nearly in equilibrium, the total yearly outlay amounting to about 1,400,000 Italian *lire*. But already in the year 1888-89 he had brought this sum up to 1,736,000, with the result that a

deficit of 235,000,000 *lire* remained, and there was no possibility of filling it and restoring the balance. In fact, during the years Crispi was in office the Italian Debt increased by leaps and bounds.

But while he exhausted the finances of the country in order to give it a navy which at one time ranked third in Europe after those of England and France, and in order to strengthen and reorganise the army on a German model, Crispi embarked Italy on a terrible political and economic struggle with France, he raised his country to Germany's level in the Triple Alliance and gave a political meaning to the friendship with Great Britain.

It is Crispi's glory to have accomplished what neither the weak Ricasoli and Minghetti Cabinets, although nominally followers of Cavour's policy, nor the Rattazzi or Depretis Ministries, hampered as they were with the opportunism of their home policy, ever succeeded in doing, namely to demonstrate that Italy belongs to the group of great European Powers. But Crispi, in his worship for power and in the excessive vanity of his grand individuality, conquered a place for Italy among the great Powers of Europe at a terrible sacrifice to the country itself. "You are too great for a country like Italy," Count D'Arco remarked to him one day; and if we take the edge of irony from this compliment, it becomes the most just appreciation of the man. Crispi himself once exclaimed: "If only I had made England instead of Italy!"

In the face of violent opposition and hostility Crispi never relinquished his dream of a greater Italy. He embarked upon the African war merely because Italy, like the other great States of Europe, was to have her colonies, and that war cost six hundred millions of *lire*, besides shameful

humiliations. The rupture of the commercial treaty with France, caused by Crispi's policy, who wished to affirm Italy's moral independence, produced a terrible crisis in the peninsula and delayed its economic development at least ten years. It was not before 1900 that Italy's foreign commerce recovered from the shock and rose again to three milliards of *lire*, as it had been in the year which preceded the war of tariffs with France. And under the influence of his policy it was easy to mark the progressive impoverishment of the country, as demonstrated by the steady decline in the consumption of such necessary articles as bread, meat, sugar, and coffee.

If Crispi succeeded in imposing for many years an expensive military policy upon a country such as Italy, where the numerous ills caused by denutrition reap thousands of lives every year and keep the southern provinces in a state bordering upon barbarism, this grave political error demonstrates to what an eminent degree the man who imposed it upon a nation of thirty-two millions of inhabitants must have possessed self-confidence, courage, and power of will.

When Crispi saw the signs of dissatisfaction and the economic ills caused by his policy increasing to a dangerous extent, then he would have recourse to his extraordinarily fervid imagination, which seldom failed to come to his aid. Thus when, following the dictates of his authoritative character, he had become a reactionary, in a speech pronounced at Palermo on May 15th, 1892, he spoke of the rights of labour in a veritable socialistic strain, and shortly afterwards introduced a bill which aimed at the abolition of the *latifondi* or extensive landed property in Italy. On another occasion the politician who had always violently

advocated the destruction of the Temporal Power, following an open anti-clerical policy, attempted to bring about a conciliation between modern Italy and the Vatican, and in 1895 maintained in a speech at Naples the necessity of living in peace with the Papacy. In 1894 Crispi, who had hitherto been the most pugnacious of Italian politicians and had despised all opposition, on being again called to the government invoked the *trève de Dieu* of all parties, just as in 1890, after having shown his contempt for the policy of commercial treaties, he proposed to Count von Caprivi the formation of a Central European Federation of Customs. In another age, with an imagination so fervid and inconstant, Crispi might have become the apostle of some new religion or led a crusade to the Holy Land.

But it was not in Crispi's nature to pause in order to perfect the little fleeting projects of his fervid fantasy. His intellectual and political personality was too deeply imbued with the desire to make a greater Italy, from the political greatness and military strength of which he hoped that the economic good of the country would spring up as a natural and necessary result. Though he had on several occasions drawn up a complete programme of political and administrative reforms, and though in 1860, as Garibaldi's minister, he had shown in those dictatorial decrees, which constitute perhaps his best work as a statesman, that he was possessed of a powerful administrative and organising mind, he sacrificed everything to this grand ideal of raising Italy to the rank of a great Power. As early as 1866, when he had not yet been converted to the monarchical faith and was still a Radical, he spoke as follows: "We have had civil wars and powerful revolutions, but a war

in which Italy alone has struggled with the foreigner and shown her strength has still to take place. It is well that there should be such a war. Italy needs a baptism of blood; she owes it to herself, so that the great nations of Europe may know that she too is a great nation, and sufficiently strong to command respect in the world."

In Crispi's mind political power, backed by cannon and bayonets, was to open the way to riches and prosperity for Italy, as it had done for Germany. All his life he basked in the rays of this great ideal. To this he sacrificed his republican faith and rebelled against Mazzini, whose disciple he had been: to the realisation of it he devoted his whole political career which has been an uninterrupted struggle of half a century's duration; and as he was always fixed in this ideal, he often appeared to be an opportunist in politics, the Gambetta of Italy, as he was called.

He has died with the tormenting consciousness of having never realised his ideal and of having been always misunderstood. One day, not long before his death, the conversation turned upon Bismarck, and on the great work he had accomplished: "But he was thirty years in power and had time to carry out a programme!" exclaimed Crispi. And this man who, in the enthusiasm of his ideals, always remained a child, and could never see FEDORA acted without evincing deep emotion, also on this occasion was unable to refrain from shedding tears.

If Crispi, after the disaster of Adowa, voluntarily abandoned the government, presenting his resignation in the Chamber of Deputies, although he was still sure of a majority, if he spontaneously withdrew from political life, this must not be attributed to lack of courage

or resolution. For these redeeming qualities of the statesman were never lost or crushed, not even by the overwhelming military disaster or by the terrible accusations brought against him in connection with the shameless squandering of public money during the African war. Crispi was only conquered by age and fatigue, which had at length got the best of his powerful constitution. During his last period of office Crispi began to suffer from such frequent and serious losses of memory that he even forgot what had been decided in a preceding Cabinet Council. During this sad closing scene he was surrounded by crowds of parasites whom he had no longer the strength to drive away, and who, under the false guise of friendship, were the real authors of the plundering of public funds for which Crispi was responsible. And he also tolerated in his Cabinet ministers, like Sonnino, whose policy was notoriously opposed to his own, and whose resignation he would in happier days have peremptorily demanded, as he had done in his first Cabinet.

But the nervous and intellectual *debacle* began even before his last tenure of office. Only thus can we explain the phenomenon of a statesman, whose political experience and abilities were recognised even by his adversaries, committing a deliberate suicide in 1891 when he pronounced a few stupid and perfectly useless phrases against a section of the Chamber of Deputies which had hitherto always supported him and which consequently rose as one man against him and forced him to resign. Nor is it to be wondered at if Crispi at the age of seventy, after a life

spent in continual struggles and in uninterrupted, feverish activity, should begin to show signs of fatigue. During this last sad period, of his exaggerated individual sentiment, of his powerful will and blind courage, nothing remained but the gesture, the famous *colpo di pugno*, or emphatic striking of the fist, more expressive than any amount of vehement words.

With Crispi disappears one of the greatest political figures of the past century, a man gifted with a marvellous power of imagination, capable of conceiving and carrying out the epic expedition of the Thousand, and so conscious of his own commanding personality that he was courageous to the point of foolhardiness, and so full of his political ideal as to subdue and drag into his way of thinking even his adversaries themselves.

It would be difficult to say whether he assumed the reins of power too late to fully carry out his political programme, or whether that programme was in itself a mistake, a mere Utopia for a country like Italy. All Italy is now trying to solve the dispute, and even over his grave there are two opposite parties, the one praising the deceased statesman with exaggerated fervour, the other continuing to pelt him with insults and the most terrible accusations.

But of Crispi's great energy and resolute will, which made him known as the Dictator by his adversaries, no beneficial result has remained in a country so disorganised as Italy, and the only visible vestige of his work is the financial exhaustion brought about by his government.

G. M. FLAMINGO.

AN UNPUBLISHED POEM BY ROBERT BURNS.

[The following verses were recently found among some papers belonging to the late Mrs. Berrington, who died in 1885. During a great part of her life Mrs. Berrington lived in Monmouthshire, at no great distance from Itton Court, the home of Mrs. Curre, to whom, according to the endorsement on the manuscript, the verses were addressed by Burns. Mrs. Curre, who died in 1823, was the daughter of John Bushby, Esq., of Tinwald Downs in Dumfriesshire. The copy from which the verses are printed is in the early handwriting of the late Miss Eliza Waddington, whose family also lived in Monmouthshire. It is hoped that the present publication may lead to the discovery of the original manuscript.]

Oh look na, young Lassie, sae softly and sweetly !
 Oh smile na, young Lassie, sae sweetly on me !
 Ther's nought waur to bear than the mild glance of pity
 When grief swells the heart and the tear blins the e'e.

Just such was the glance of my bonnie lost Nancy,
 Just such was the glance that once brightened her e'e ;
 But lost is the smile sae impressed on my fancy,
 And cauld is the heart that sae dear was to me.

Ilka wee flow'ret we grieve to see blighted,
 Cow'ring and with'ring in frost nipplet plain ;
 The naist turn of Spring shall awauken their beauty,
 But ne'er can Spring wauken my Nancy again.

And was she less fair than the flow'rs of the garden
 Was she less sweet than the blossoms of May ?
 Oh, was na her cheek like the rose and the lily,
 Like the Sun's waving glance at the closing o' day ?

And oh sic a heart, sae gude and sae tender !
 Weel was it fitted for beauty sae leal :
 Twas as pure as the drop in the bell o' the lily,
 A wee glinting gem wi' nought to conceal.

But the blush and the smile and the dark e'es mild glances,
 I prized them thê maist, they were love's kind return,
 Yet far less the loss of sic beauty lamented,
 'Twas the love that she bore me that gaes me to mourn.

DICKENS AND MODERN HUMOUR.

THE conceptions of novelists, though not necessarily their power of treatment, have grown continuously from the beginning. If we take Fielding as a starting-point—though he himself, with trouble, may be proved a direct descendant (shall we say?) of Apuleius and Homer—we shall find a steady growth in the extent of the material which the novel is thought fit to cover. The stages of the growth may be suitably marked by Fielding, Scott, Hugo or Balzac, George Eliot, and even Mr. George Meredith. In the last instance there is clearly no increase of skill, of actual merit, of poignancy, on the work of Fielding. It is merely that the aim and scope have altered, and on the whole, if judged by intention, not by performance, *THE EGOIST* is as much superior to *NOTRE DAME* as *NOTRE DAME* is to *TOM JONES*. Using the test of evolution, the more complex is a development of the more simple, the bird of Paradise many ages superior to the archæopterix. But it is even more true that *THE EGOIST* is incomparably inferior to *TOM JONES*. The later author reminds one of a belated traveller stumbling about a field of turnips on a dark night; there are curses, headlong scrambles to prevent a fall, somersaults, terrors of looming shapes, stops to kick off the gathered mud, weariness, and but little progress. When, if ever, the writer reaches home a glow of pride for the memorable difficulties he has conquered is intense; such a task none ever before attempted, and if the labour was long and the method ungainly, what matter? *Finis* can be

written with a flourish, and writer and reader are together proud. Fielding did not try such a route; he turned into the road and moved smoothly along, neither fast nor slow, now and again, if he felt so disposed, leaning on the top bar of a gate to express his gratitude that nowadays cross-country routes were unnecessary; when he reached home he had his dinner and went to sleep, happy enough but not particularly proud. Why should he be? He had travelled, with a good deal of pleasure, his natural course. Like many of Fielding's successors, Mr. Meredith has been too ambitious; why should they strain to make the novel an amalgamation of all literature? The teller of a story should be above all things unconscious; and, in spite of development and theories, a novel still depends for its claim to merit on the sheer capacity for romantic narration. So although the novel since his day has made good its claim to be as serious a piece of lasting literature as a drama or a picture or a poem, the first English novelist is at least as great as the last, as Mr. Meredith or as Mr. Hardy.

Now Dickens in his infancy learned *TOM JONES* almost by heart, and necessarily imbibed some of the character of the author. Critics, who like to fit every author into his place in the mosaic of their theory, have condemned Dickens out of hand because he was the last of a school which had been superseded by one of higher and wider aims. As Stevenson pointed out in connection with Victor Hugo, great moral principles are part

of the tissue of modern tales. Take away the *motif*, on which all the French critics lay such stress, from *LES TRAVAILLEURS DE LA MER* and no story is left. With Dickens, though no one more deliberately and vigorously attacked standing abuses, the people are the thing. It is as if hypocrisy were invented to illustrate Mr. Pecksniff. Such an elemental creation could never have been fashioned by secondary inspiration. Chiefly for this reason all attempts to fit Dickens into an essential place in the development of fiction have been found beside the mark. His date, as well as his character, forbids it. Though he owed much to Fielding he is in no full sense of Fielding's school; and though in aim he is as simple as Mr. Meredith is complex, his work is not therefore earlier in theoretical evolution. Even with regard to Thackeray, with whom he is often unfairly compared, he is his contrary, not his contradictory, naturally different, not consciously opposed. He belongs to the immortal band of observers, the men whose observation is so keen and interest so vivid that articulate expression becomes a necessity. When the kettle boils, the steam must escape. The character, training, environment of the authors give them each individuality, but Dickens's laughable hyperbole, Thackeray's genial cynicism, Hugo's melodramatic extravagances, are individual accidents, not the inheritance of a school. Dickens, then, is neither the first nor the last of a school, though he owed much to Fielding, and has been now and then slavishly imitated by Daudet. Literary men have, from time to time, thrown off a sketch or two, as Gigadibs did, which may be mistaken for Dickens, but to keep up the effort for a hundred pages is beyond the power of imitation.

But though fortunately Dickens founded no school, his work has produced an almost unexampled effect on the humour of a whole nation. It is impossible to estimate the popularity of the novels in America, but it is certain that if he had received a penny royalty on the sale of his books there, he would have been, in spite of his generous habits, a man of vast wealth. The number of pirated editions was immense; it is no wonder that he wrote home with such bitterness of the cruelty that the want of a copyright-law entailed. He may be said to have been the first novelist whom the whole nation through all its castes read and enjoyed. He found, as he writes in one of the letters from America, even "the carmen of Hertford in their blue frocks all reading my books." Though his published impressions of America caused the deepest indignation, which was intensified by the powerful but rather unhappy chapters in *MARTIN CHUZZLEWIT*, he regained his popularity quickly for the reason that his bitterest foes had never escaped from the grip of his charm. His humour "fair whipped," as one of them said, anything they had read before; and the appreciation of it, widespread beyond precedent, had exercised an unprecedented influence on the style of the nation's humour.

No people have a form of humour so well defined as the Americans. It is not perhaps particularly admirable; it is not literary; it is certainly much inferior to the humour of Dickens's novels, but it is still descended directly, having developed certain unfortunate features, from the children of Dickens's genius. On humour in England Dickens has exercised no similar effect because the quality of the nation's humour was already individual when Dickens wrote. In some ways his humour is not particu-

larly English, or rather it exaggerated one attribute to the exclusion of others. Typical English humour, the result of Teuton solidity meeting Celtic imagination, is reticent, subtle, even, it may be, grim; it is chiefly marked, as a rule, by inward appreciation, and more often made articulate by action than by speech. A twinkle at the corner of the mouth is a more frequent sign than an epigram or a laugh. But it is well to remember that there are no clowns like the English, no such physical humourists, so to speak, who plunge into extravagant quiddities for the mere zest of tumultuous life. Dickens was a prince of clowns, and the title is commendatory. His whole person overflowed with vitality, and the fun in him came out anyhow, tricked in grotesque trappings, tumbling into ridiculous antics, grimacing, frowning, blubbing, cracking whips, turning catherine-wheels, mimicking, originating; but always it was exuberant, and in the midst of the most farcical folly betraying an almost supernatural shrewdness of observation. Such, from one isolated point of view, was Dickens's humour, and in this aspect it appealed with universal force to the American people. There existed no doubt traces of this bent of humour in the States before Dickens wrote; but his work, especially the earliest and least mature, gave an impetus to the movement by reason of which it is still hurried forward. The cardinal attribute of American humour is exaggeration. It seeks out and clings to the extravagant, heaping hyperbole on hyperbole with care to leave the grotesquiest addition to the top of the outrageous heap. The effect of the stories is always cumulative. Of those that are quotable one of the best examples is the description of the latest rifle-club, and its use was to cap any "tall" talking from visitors.

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The opening, to borrow a metaphor from the chess-board, is one commonly played by Americans. A foreigner had spoken of his nation's skill with the rifle. "That's nothing," said his host. "In America, we never think of shooting at a still target; someone just rolls a tub down-hill, and you've got to put three consecutive bullets into the bunghole before you can become a member of the club. There's a fresh trial of the members every month, and every man that misses one of his three shots has to leave the club." Then, with a pause designed to create the impression that hyperbole had reached its limit, the narrator would add, "And we haven't lost a member for four years." The incidents of the story are cumulative. By artificial extravagance, lie is heaped upon lie till altitude can be carried no further. Just the same means are adopted with considerable effect by Mark Twain in his sketch, popular at Penny Readings, of the doings and goings of his watch after he had begun to meddle with the regulator. If you are in boisterous health, you may indulge in tumults of laughter. If your mood is only receptive, not aggressive, you will find your sense of humour strained to the breaking-point. There is no middle course possible, no midway smile between appreciation and laughter.

It is a commonplace, and a particularly irritating commonplace, of criticism that Dickens is spoiled by exaggeration. Mr. Micawber, we are told, and Mark Tapley are gross caricatures. "Dickens could not draw a gentleman," as if Mr. Pickwick was ever anything else. "No man of literary perceptions can read Dickens if he has learned to appreciate Thackeray," as though Peggotty's heart were not as valuable as Becky's brain. "Dickens's pathos is a model of mock sentiment," as though even

the critics themselves in their salad-days had not suffered with Agnes and Dr. Strong. Dickens is no artist, they assure us, and the prophets prophesy, in the face of the new editions, that the Dodsons and Gamps will die forgotten as soon as manners change and abuses are scattered. Poor Dickens! When the literary man has done with him, there is nothing left but a substratum of burlesque humour, fit to please a few uncultured spirits of the middle class. Even the admirers of Dickens grant the truth of these arguments, and confess that the portraiture of the character is generally damaged by some hyperbolic attribute. There are no Quilps in real life who swallow liquid fire; hypocrites do not reach the Pecksniffian level; small Olivers do not whimper over mothers they have never known. These charges, partially accurate in the letter, are founded on a misconception; but it is true that the exaggerative and boisterous qualities of Dickens have chiefly enthralled Americans; and it is the popular misconception of Dickens's art and aim, fostered by certain critics, which has perverted throughout America the influence of Dickens's work. With a natural appreciation of extravagances, such as those they thought they had found in Dickens, American humourists, imitating consciously or unconsciously, sought to create effects, similar, for instance, to Mr. Dounce's quandary in the *SKETCHES BY BOZ*, by inventing a series of ridiculous situations. But the result has been something essentially different from anything in Dickens, because with him the occurrences are always co-ordinate emanations from a central character, with the Americans they are successive *tours de force* of the author's inventiveness. Now and

then, perhaps, in Dickens the events are grotesque and extravagant, but they are never unreal, because the characters commit just that sort of action which they should in accordance with the essential attributes of their definition. The degree of the action may be disproportionate, its quality never is. With writers, on the other hand, whose characters are produced by the events, the action is the essential part, and if the details be judged improbable or unconvincing the tale or sketch loses its justification.

We may say that Dickens never consciously set out for dramatic situation. His characters did that for him, acting as did John Inglesant on Mr. Shorthouse. "It was days," Mr. Shorthouse once said, "before I could make Inglesant travel over to Italy." Inglesant's heart was in the little village of Gidding and he refused to leave England, and it was not till after a week's wrestling that he reluctantly yielded to his author's remonstrances and crossed the channel. In the pages of the book you feel the hero's reluctance; he drags along, for the reason that his experiences were not of his own finding. The characters he created were more real to Dickens than Inglesant was to Mr. Shorthouse, and Dickens was seldom foolish enough to contradict their wishes. His method is excellently described in one of his letters to Felton: "I am in great health and spirits and powdering away at Chuzzlewit while all manner of face-tiousness rises up before me as I go on." The humour rose up, the situations came: "He spoke in numbers for the numbers came." Such confessions may be made by almost every genius, and of no one is it truer than of Dickens that "he wrote because he could not help it." His characters, at least in the earlier novels, said

what they said because he could not help it. Without the help of the good lady no one, not even Dickens, could have written Mrs. Nickleby's more eloquent speeches: there is less exaggeration in the whole of her amazing orations than in a page of Mark Twain (a great humourist, we grant,) or of Mr. Jerome, who represents American humour on its way back to England. Contrast the most ludicrous passage (for instance, the slipping of the tow-rope) in Mr. Jerome's *THREE MEN IN A BOAT*, with any speech taken at haphazard from the lips of Mrs. Nickleby, and the superiority of the method of Dickens to the best efforts of American and the newest English humour will appear at once. Hers is the true oratory. Listen to her at the theatre with Sir Mulberry Hawk and his delectable companions.

"I think there must be something in the place, for, soon after I was married, I went to Stratford with poor dear Mr. Nickleby, in a post-chaise from Birmingham—was it a post-chaise though?" said Mrs. Nickleby, considering. "Yes it must have been a post-chaise, because I recollect remarking at the time that the driver had a green shade over his left eye;—in a post-chaise from Birmingham, and after we had seen Shakespeare's tomb and birthplace, we went back to the inn there, where we slept that night, and I recollect that all night long I dreamt of nothing but a black gentleman, at full length, in plaster-of-Paris, with a lay-down collar tied with two tassels, leaning against a post and thinking; and when I woke in the morning and described him to Mr. Nickleby, he said it was Shakespeare just as he had been when he was alive, which was very curious indeed. Stratford—Stratford," continued Mrs. Nickleby, considering. "Yes, I am positive about that, because I recollect I was in the family-way with my son Nicholas at the time, and I had been very much frightened by an Italian image-boy that very morning. In fact, it was quite a mercy, ma'am," added Mrs. Nickleby, in a whisper to Mrs. Witterly, "that my son didn't turn out to be a Shakespeare,

and what a dreadful thing that would have been!"

Mrs. Nickleby speaks as her definition compelled; she was forced by inward compulsion to live up to her attributes. The case is exactly reversed with a great deal of the humour that is now commended; it is either imported or reported. That is to say, facetious words or ridiculous occurrences are fetched from anywhere and this or that character compelled to say or act them, though they each would be just as funny if it were spoken or experienced by anyone else. We may take the adventures of the *Three Men in a Boat*, or of the *Invisible Man*, or even of *Huckleberry Finn*, as illustrative; the words and occurrences are imported.

Another class of humourist, who is now enjoying a vogue, laboriously studies a locality and its slang, and then invents characters and story to illustrate the entries in the notebook. Mr. Morrison, who writes picturesquely and powerfully, was greatly commended in a late review for his "easy swing of detail." He had, in a word, a large amount of notes to pick from, and he made us laugh by the accuracy of his reports. There is an undoubted laugh in the boast of the man that he had "a pair of Benjamins cut saucy with double fake-ments down the sides." The phrase we remember well, but who it was that said it we have long since forgotten. On the other hand let anyone hear such simple unremarkable words as "so disposed" or "swelling wisely," and the pictures of Mrs. Gamp or of Tony Weller rise up instantly. The mind acts on the law of association of ideas, by which, if two things are once associated together, ever afterwards the appearance of the lesser tends to suggest the greater. If the character came before the words

in the order of creation, the hearing of the words will recall the character; if the phrase was made and afterwards put into a character's mouth, we must hear of both the character and the phrase before we can recall their connection.

The causes of what we may call the degeneration of humour are reciprocal, as between author and public. There is continuous pressure on the author to supply what the public wishes, and the wishes of the public are fostered by the sort of literature which authors supply. The author may be above his public; but he is also of it, vitiated by its prejudices and inspired with its enthusiasms, and there can be no doubt that the bulk of people prefer that sort of forced wit which the admirers of Dickens deprecate. As a test of popular opinion it is illuminating to cross-examine a number of people who may be described without offence as belonging to the class of professional novel-reader. The unanimity of their criticisms will be surprising. Let Mr. Barrie, in his capacity as humourist, be taken as the subject of interrogation. Let one story, for example *THE COURTING OF T'NOWHEAD'S BELL*, be selected for illustrating our professional novel-reader's theories of humour. It will be found that at least nine out of ten will become rapturous over that detail of the story in which occurs the description of the race, as watched from the kirk gallery, between Sanders Elshioner (who took the roadway and to his eternal disgrace ran on the Sabbath) and Samuel the weaver, who tried the short cut over the burn and up the commony. The race is described with much spirit and the details are diverting; but the essence of the story, its claim to a more than fugitive distinction, its real humour, lies in the subsequent events as displayed in the repeated conversations

between the canny Sanders and the diffident Samuel. The conclusion is quite excellent.

"Ye'll be gaein' up to the manse to arrange wi' the minister the morn's mornin'," continued Sanders in a subdued voice.

Sam'l looked wistfully at his friend. "I canna do't, Sanders," he said, "I canna do't."

"Ye maun," said Sanders.

"It's aisy to speak," retorted Sam'l bitterly.

"We have a' oor troubles, Sam'l," said Sanders soothingly, "an' every man maun bear his ain burdens. Johnnie Davie's wife's dead, and he's no repinin'."

"Ay," said Sam'l, "but a death's no a maritch; we hae ha'en deaths in oor family too."

"I maun hae langer to think o't," said Sam'l.

"Bell's maritch is the morn'," said Sanders decisively.

The Scotch allusiveness and the characters of the two men are illustrated here with an exquisite touch, and in this vein Mr. Barrie would have done really good work. He is not Scott, but Sanders and Sam'l have the native charm which has helped to make Caleb Balderstone and Andrew Fairservice immortal. Sanders is a small man compared with the Olympians of Scott; but Sanders in pursuit of a wife is endowed with the real native humour not less truly than Caleb running off with the wild ducks on the spit or Andrew in the arrangement of a horse-deal. But the later Barrie! What a falling off is there! And the reason is not only that Thrums had been worked out and the store of its characters exhausted, but that popularity lay in the direction of extravagant incident, of hyper-sensitive sentiment.

There is another fault in the later humourists which is also conspicuous in many writers on other subjects, even on science. It springs in the

first place from hurry and from the poverty of thought which must result from it. Authors will not take even a vastly modified form of Horace's advice to let their work lie fallow for a time. Mr. Shorthouse did it in the case of JOHN INGLESANT; Messieurs Paul et Victor Margueritte have made a trilogy of novels the work of a lifetime; but in most cases the man who is conscious of talent exhausts his material as soon as it is acquired; he shapes out the forms of his imagination before he has learned his business. The immediate result is thinness. It is as if Dickens, having come across the abominations of a Bumble or a Squeers, had filled OLIVER TWIST and NICHOLAS NICKLEBY with their doings to the exclusion of the thieves, actors, and the rest of the immortal characters that fill the pages. Supposing, again, that Dickens had acquired such an intimate knowledge of Thames shipping as Mr. Jacobs, we should have had from him glorious chapters winking to the brim with the bubbles of humour; but to offer a brew of nothing but Thames boatmen would never have occurred to him.

A humourist, whose field should be as wide as his world, needs above all things broad observation and broad sympathy. The world is right in refusing to keep before its eyes a number of miniatures. However clever and neat, they must become wearisome and unsatisfying. We can put up with a few. Mr. Jacobs undoubtedly makes us laugh; in his vein he has genuine wit and humour, and needs only to give himself wider scope. Mr. Hope is subtle and clever beyond his classical predecessors. Mr. Anstey, on the almost irritating irony of fate working in the unimaginative medium of middle class lives, has won more than an ephemeral success; but they are all too contracted, too subtle, too

clever, too careful of means, too well bridled. They are infinitely superior to most of their farcical contemporaries who must be always sticking spurs into jaded nature, that she may seem, at any rate to the gallery, to be gambolling naturally; but something bigger is wanted, a man before whom "all manner of facetiousness will rise up" as he writes. He will not come while men are content to spread their stuff thin, and to write before they have realised. In spite of his many deficiencies the one exception is Mr. Kipling. He is real; he speaks that he knows; his humour is inherent and plain-spoken; Mulvaney is and the drummer-boys of the Fore and Aft *were*. His imagination is actual on whatever subject it works.

When 'Omer smote 'is bloomin' lyre
'E'd 'eard men sing by land and sea;
An' what 'e thought 'e might require
'E wen' and took, the same as me.

This is the true historical imagination, which working on things past or present sees for itself without straining and without distortion. Even so free from hypocrisy was Dickens, and the modern novelist and the modern humourist both need a full dose of him. The Americans have only copied his extravagances and, if we may allow the criticism, his want of style. The English humourists have either taken a sort of tertiary inspiration through the Americans, or have mistaken the humour of situations for the humour of character and the product of the mere intellect for the expression of character. We are told that Dickens is about to go out of favour. The consummation will only be reached when the sense of humour is destroyed either by the dilettante affectations of professional word-catchers or the overwhelming flood of paragraphic facetiousness.

THE LAND OF THE POPPY.

IV.—ITS RIVER-LIFE.

SARJU is a name common to several rivers in a certain district of Poppy Land. In order therefore to distinguish one Sarju from another it is necessary to prefix an adjective before the name. The river of which I speak, and on whose green banks I have spent so many happy hours, is the Chota Sarju, which translated into the English tongue means the Lesser Sarju. The Chota Sarju is in reality the off-scourings of a much larger river, the course of which was artificially diverted into an old channel which joins another river known as the Koriala. This diverted stream is now called the Sarju, and the surplus water that flows a mile past the station of Bahraich is the one known as the Chota Sarju. The head waters of the stream are in the hills of Nepaul, and the river is consequently liable to floods which usually occur at the commencement of and during the rainy season. A mile from the cluster of bungalows and the crowded bazaar, that rejoices in the name of Bahraich, a small pontoon bridge has been thrown across the stream.

River crossings or fords are known in India as *ghâts*, and the place where the pontoon bridge has been constructed is called Golwa Ghât. Fifty yards above the pontoons the abutments of a masonry bridge are still standing, the silent monuments of an engineering mistake. The bridge was apparently not built with sufficient water-escape, and when the river rose in its wrath the arches came down like a house of cards, and no attempt

has been made to rebuild it. Between the ruined abutments and the pontoon bridge the river widens into a deep pool or *khund*. To the south of this there is another shallower pool joined to the larger one by a narrow channel. Looking up the river from the foot of the ruins, the scene is a strikingly beautiful one. The river winds through a broad green plain, covered with feathery grasses and dotted with clumps and groves of handsome trees. Above everything is the glorious sky of Bahraich. The sunsets here would fill the heart of an artist with rejoicing and despair, with delight at the indescribable cloud-effects and glowing lights, with despair at the thought of having to reproduce by means of such coarse mediums as paint and canvas the glorious tints that greet his eyes.

The fishes of the Chota Sarju may be broadly divided into vegetable feeders and those that require animal food. The vegetable feeders belong to the families of Indian carp and trout, and may be distinguished by their scaly bodies, tough leathery lips, and small mouths. The flesh-eaters are predaceous in their habits, and have mostly large flat heads, with wide jaws armed with numerous teeth. Their bodies are clothed with a tough pliant skin generally of a silver colour on the sides and a greyish green on the back and head. They are most of them repulsive-looking creatures, but some afford fairly good sport with rod and line.

Chief among these aquatic highwaymen is the *parhin*, a voracious feeder and relentless destroyer of the young carp and trout. The dental armament of this fish is particularly formidable, and it must be seen to be properly understood. The head of one of these fierce creatures lies before me as I write. It is ten inches in length, and of this the jaws occupy five inches, the under jaw protruding a little beyond the upper. The teeth, looking like small ivory pins, are arranged in a dense belt about an inch broad in both jaws, and are countless in number. It would be thought that this apparatus would be enough to ensure the capture of the slipperiest of the long-nosed eels that wriggle in the mud at the bottom of the river; but the destruction of the *parhin's* victim is rendered still more certain by clusters of teeth arranged on his palate. The eye-sockets are high up on the sides of the flattened head, and are thus placed because the wily creature conceals itself in the mud, or in a dense patch of weeds, and awaits there the approach of some unwary victim on which it darts with relentless fury, eyes glaring, whiskers outstretched, and jaws wide open, the incarnation of hideous gluttony.

The saw-like action of the *parhin's* jaws is often too much for ordinary gut, and if there is a really large one about a few strands of fine wire are often used instead. The *parhin* makes a grand rush when struck, but after that one desperate plunge for freedom, his courage often oozes out of him, and the coward comes passively to land staring stupidly at the strange world into which he is hauled only to be instantly executed. The death of a *parhin* is looked upon by all anglers as an act of retributive justice; hence none are spared when caught, and even a baby *parhin* is

destroyed with as much gusto as the patriarch of the family. The flesh of this fish is coarse and muddy. But on this, as on all other points, tastes differ, and partisans are not wanting who declare that the *parhin* properly smoked over a fire of sugarcane-sticks becomes a dish fit to set before a king. Native fishermen will accept the brute gratefully, considering him a delicacy even without the aid of sugarcane and smoke.

Another member of the criminal tribes of fishes, that may be found lurking in the mud, in dark holes, or under the shadows of the pontoons, ready to destroy the unwary *rohu* or *naini* that may approach it, is the *gunch* or *Bagarius Yarrelli* of naturalists. This fish is the one commonly known as the fresh-water shark. It is clothed with a thick leathery skin, blotched with black and flesh colour, the head flattened, and as usual the upper jaw is furnished with two long feelers. The jaws have a powerful armament of teeth. The *gunch* is not very common in the Chota Sarju, and I have not heard of any very large ones having been caught here. In other rivers it runs very large, often to as much as a hundred pounds. It has been harpooned, and if the harpoon used be sufficiently light the sport, it is said, becomes exciting.

These two fish may in a popular way be described as river-sharks, but there are several other predatory fish of smaller size and strength. One of the most numerous of these is the *mohi*.

The *mohi* may frequently be seen rising to the surface of the water, taking a mouthful of air, and diving straight down again, showing as it does so a broad gleam of silver. It attains to a considerable size, often reaching three or four feet in length, and weighing from twenty to thirty pounds. Its configuration viewed

sideways is peculiar. The shoulders rise in a great hump over the long flat head, and then curve gently down to the tail. The body is compressed and flattened. A *mohi* that would measure about four inches across the back at the broadest part might be about fifteen inches from dorsal to ventral fin. The dorsal fin is prolonged until it meets the tail to which it is united, and the tail fin is not forked as in the carp family. The *mohi* affords fairly good sport with rod and line in March and April, and will take worms freely; another favourite bait is the *chilwa*, a species of small fish with which the river teems.

The success that attends the efforts of the country angler armed with his rude implements, must be attributed to his thorough knowledge of the habits of the fishes to be found in the rivers and lakes of the district in which he lives. He will saunter up to the river-side where you have been spending hours unsuccessfully, armed with the best apparatus obtainable in the country, bringing with him a stout bamboo that looks more adapted for a barge-pole than a fishing-rod. Nevertheless, it is his fishing-rod, and to one end of it he has fastened a coarse black line, from which, without any intervening gut or gimp, dangles a large iron hook. His float is a piece of the thick dry stalk of the *sarpat* grass, called in this state a *senta*. It is about a foot long, and lies flat on the water. He deftly baits his hook with about six live *chilwas*, throws out his line and squats on his haunches, shading his eyes with one hand, while with the other he keeps a light touch on the pole. In ten minutes his float is hopping merrily. He waits till it has quite disappeared, makes a strong stroke with the inflexible pole, and with a grunt of satisfaction proceeds

to deliberately haul up a vast silver *mohi*. Slinging his twenty pounds of fish over his shoulder he trots home contentedly in the shades of the evening, humming nasally the refrain of a country song, "*Ye dunnaya jaisa ek sarai* (This world is but an inn to rest awhile)," which is not inappropriate to the fish's career in the generous waters of the Chota Sarju.

The particular antipathy of all fishermen in these waters is the *tengan*. This fish is as tantalising to the angler as the brahminy duck and the peewit are to the gunner. He has no scales, being clothed in a tough skin like his other predatory relatives; but he differs from them in having a round smallish mouth with thick leathery lips, and his teeth, if he has any, are in his palate. His pectoral and dorsal fins are armed with sharp spines, and with these he often wounds the finger of any one who, ignorant of his powerful weapons, attempts to disgorge a hook he has taken.

His mouth in common with his tribe is furnished with feelers,—two long and two short ones—and when landed he often emits a doleful squeaking sound. The greed of this fish is phenomenal; he spares no bait, be it *chilwa*, worm, or paste, and calmly appropriates the most tempting collations that have been spread with a view of attracting his betters. While he is feeding the carp keep aloof, not seeming to care for his society. It is easy to tell when he is at work, for he keeps up an annoying feeble tugging at the bait, and every now and then draws the float quite under water in his attempts to carry the booty to his den to devour it at leisure. As cunning as he is greedy he eludes stroke after stroke. Times without number he will clean the hook, until the angler wearied and disgusted quits the spot for some other

swim where he devoutly hopes there are no *tengans*. The best plan is to leave the brute to his own devices and let him drag the bait about as much as he likes, when he will probably end by hooking himself. Feeling some slight resistance as he circles ever deeper and deeper towards the mud the *tengan* fears the tempting morsel, held gingerly in his tough lips, will escape him. He makes a violent effort, and succeeds in swallowing the bait. On pulling up the line he will be found dangling at the end, often with the barb of the hook driven through his head. The greedy wretch may then be put out of pain at once, and the angler will find it has paid him to have devoted some time to the destruction of this pest.

The river is going down now, and Karim Bakhsh, that pearl of fishermen, has come to tell us that the weary days of waiting are over, and the vanguard of the fish has arrived. All through the rains the waters of the river have been turbulent and muddy, and the fish have been spawning in the shallow reaches higher up. Our rods and lines have lain idle in our rooms, while we ourselves have often gone down to the *ghat* to watch the silver-sided *mohi* rolling in the discoloured flood. But now the water is clearing and falling, and as we jump from the dog-cart and hurry to the canoe waiting among the bulrushes and duckweed at the river's brink, we can see the *rohu* leaping, and visions of lusty twenty-pounders dance before our eyes.

The Chota Sarju has its peculiarities, and one of them is that its fish will not take a fly. Bottom-fishing is the order of the day, and though good results may be obtained with the rod and line, the best bags are made with the hand-line. The bait used is chiefly earth-worms, but

there are certain fish that may be caught with paste made of flour.

Karim Bakhsh is at the river-side. He has been there since morning, and it is now two o'clock in the afternoon. He has made a little mud-platform to sit on, and fastened up a large umbrella over it. Rod and line are not to his mind. He has two hand-lines made in the local bazaar and rendered waterproof by the frequent application of the pulp of the berries of the ebony-tree. Two iron hooks, that he tells you with pride have come from Gorakhpur, are fastened near the end of each line, while at the extremity of each is a lead sinker of pyramidal shape, weighing about two ounces. On the ground beside him is a small earthen pot, in which his bait, a mass of lively earth-worms, are crawling about in some wet mud, and in front of him are two split sticks, in the clefts of which he fixes his lines after making a cast.

Karim Bakhsh has the patience of a heron and knows that in the waters of the Chota Sarju this inestimable virtue, together with a hand-line, will produce the most sport. Instead of a landing-net he carries a small gaff shaped like a pick-axe, and an iron ring with a number of large iron hooks fastened to it. This curious looking instrument he fastens to a piece of fine strong rope and employs to disentangle his line from the weeds that grow luxuriantly in the shallow water close to the bank. A small peg has been driven into the ground close to the water's edge some feet to his left, and from this a stout piece of twine leads into the water. "What is all this, Karim Bakhsh?" we ask. For answer he pulls at the twine, and from the black depths of the water a number of ruddy-tinted fish slowly rise to the surface.

Several large carp of various species, weighing from three to ten pounds

each, are threaded on this line. They are all alive, and it is Karim Bakhsh's simple if barbarous method of keeping his captures fresh. The catch is worth examining. There are a couple of lusty carp, with a reddish tinge on each scale, called *besra*, three or four with pure silvery scales and greenish backs known as *naini*, and one with a black back and grey sides to which he gives the name of *keunchi*; but there are no *rohus* or red carp proper. We take up our rods, but Karim Bakhsh intercepts us with a deprecating shake of his head, and the assurance that they are not of much use yet, and that the hand-line alone will give us sport. So we lay our rods down again with a sigh of resignation, and taking up the hand-lines essay a cast. The sinker gleams for a moment in the sun, then falls with a splash into the hurrying water, and is carried away a short distance by the force of the current.

As soon as it touches bottom the line slackens, and we haul in until there is just sufficient tension to let us know what is happening in those mysterious depths below. Five minutes elapse and the line shows no signs of approach by hungry *besra* or coy *naini*. Suddenly a thrill runs up it, a message sent unwittingly along the cable by a wary *naini* that is now reconnoitring the tempting lunch we have spread for him. Two sharp tugs follow the thrill, and then suddenly the line tautens. A deft backward jerk with the right hand fixes the hook firmly in the tough lips of the white carp who darts away filled with a sudden apprehension that all is not as it should be with that tempting lunch. After one or two futile attempts to shake himself free he gives in, and the line comes up hand over hand, and falls in glistening coils at our feet till a gleam in the water tells that the fish is close to the surface.

Suddenly it seems to dawn upon him afresh that he is in danger. The state of bewildered alarm in which he has been sunk for the last few moments gives way to a sensation of frantic terror, and he makes another desperate struggle to regain the black depths from which he has been so ruthlessly dragged. And so we fight it out, foot by foot, until the landing-net descends softly under him, and rises the next instant with a fine five pound *naini* gasping in its meshes.

Karim Bakhsh, seated by our side, initiates us into the secrets of the various bites. He understands the telegraphic code of the Chota Sarju fishes, and declares at once who the unwitting signaller is.

Now a series of sharp tugs follow in rapid succession, making the line quiver and jar against the index finger of the right hand. "It is nothing," says Karim Bakhsh, "it is nothing; the small fry are at the bait; haul in, *sahib*, and bait your hooks again, for even now they have been cleaned." As he speaks the line falls slack and limp on the water's surface. We haul up, and find our hooks innocent of bait. Karim Bakhsh looks out a particularly attractive worm from his collection in the earthen pot, and fixes it on the hooks, and the lead flies out once more with the wriggling invitation to the carps as they browse placidly on the weeds in their favourite feeding-place.

This time there is no hesitation; two or three long and strong pulls end in a tautening of the line. "Strike, *sahib*, strike," exclaims Karim in an excited whisper, and the next moment we are in the thick of a fight with a burly red carp (*rohu*). After this there is a long interval during which there is no sign but the annoying twitching of small fish. Yet all around the line

the water is alive with big fellows,— splash, splash on each side, and the swirl and bubbles tell us that they are all there; why then will they not bite? It seems inexplicable and certainly is very tantalising. Karim Bakhsh says: "*Sahib, machi ki agai hai* (Sir, this is but the vanguard of the fish)." The explanation has to be taken for what it is worth; but it is at least evident that the fish have for the time given up feeding, and we must draw upon our reserves of patience.

Lighting a cigar I lean back on one elbow and watch the teeming life in the shallow water at my feet, while my companion strolls a hundred yards down the bank to try his luck with a rod.

The bank slopes very gently for some distance under the water, and then takes a sudden dip, and the water, which up to this point has been as transparent as crystal, as suddenly becomes a greenish brown mass whose depths are impenetrable to the sight.

From these gloomy depths a number of elegant little fish suddenly make their appearance in the lighted shallows. Their bodies, which are long and tapering, are light green, showing now and then a gleam of silver as they turn in the light, and their snouts are elongated to such an extent that they resemble miniature sword-fish in appearance. They move with great rapidity, now and then stopping a moment to bask in the glorious warmth, facing up stream the whole time, and never seeming to eat anything. So delicate and graceful are they that the sight of them calls up visions of grottoes in the sea, and they seem to want a background of corals and other zoophytes to show their beauty to perfection. Yet catch one and examine it, and its delicate tapering

jaws will be found to be armed with a row of pointed fang-like teeth, resembling in miniature the teeth of the *gharial*. This delicate little creature is known as the *kawa* by the natives. Close to the edge of the bank and quite on the surface of the water swims a tiny little fish with a round gleaming plate of what looks like mother-o'-pearl on his head. The natives call him *chandaia* or the moon-fish. He is not an inch in length, but moves his fins with an easy grace and languor as if conscious of his distinguished appearance. Suddenly a cloud of mud rises up from the russet carpet, and as it settles one can see that the *guraya*, or murrel, has emerged from its ambush to make a dash at a tiny little creature whose silver sides are beautifully mottled with black. There is a flash of silver across the golden light, and the tiny fish has escaped into the dark depths beyond, while the murrel sneaks along to another hiding-place.

But all this while the fish have not been biting, although their leaping and splashing are as vigorous as ever. Suddenly a dark object appears in the middle of the pool, an object that looks very much like a bit of drift-wood.

If it is drift-wood it appears to make some unaccountable movements. A moment more and the mystery is explained, and the head and shoulders of a ten-foot *gharial* rise above the water. The *gharial* is the fish-eating crocodile of India and is distinguishable from ordinary crocodiles by its long and slender jaws, which in the case of the male are ornamented with a boss or tubercle at the end. The appearance of this most unwelcome visitor explains the lively movements of the fish and their disinclination to feed. The monster has caught sight of us in the few mo-

ments for which he thrust his sinister head out of the water, and has sunk noiselessly into the depths, leaving a momentarily vanishing swirl to show where he had been floating. In the meantime my friend has joined me, and snatching up his rifle runs a hundred yards up stream, the direction in which the *gharial* seems to be moving, while I, who have no rifle, remain where I am, watching the stream for any further signs of the poacher. Karim Bakhsh mutters curses on the intruder, and we all long for the death of the brute that has completely spoilt the day's sport. For some time he shows no signs of coming to the surface again till in the most unexpected manner, and not twenty yards from where I sit, he rises noiselessly and floats for a minute or so taking stock of the angry faces gazing at him. Before my friend can retrace his steps the crocodile has disappeared again. The baffled sportsman now creeps back along the bank, one eye fixed on the river and the other watching for treacherous holes, of which there are many hidden under the thick grass. After a long crawl he sights the *gharial*, again this time swimming on the surface, and apparently determined to make his escape. There is no time to be lost, and with a spurt that does his sixteen stone of solid flesh great credit the hunter manages to get within range. But the quarry has seen or heard him, and as he raises the rifle to his shoulder it subsides in the midst of whirling eddies and is seen no more that day.

The evening is now closing rapidly into the short twilight of the tropics, and it is too late now to hope for any more sport with the *beeras* and *nainis*. We embark in the canoe once more, and are poled across the stream in

the direction of the pontoon bridge. Jumping out we make our way up the bridge, and peer at the darkling waters around the pontoons. Here a fish every now and then rises quietly to the surface, and swims around as if questing for food. It is furnished with two long and two short whiskers or feelers on the upper jaw, and four small barbels on the lower jaw. The two long feelers are extended before it as it moves, and are slowly waved from side to side causing curious half circles on the water. This is the *baikri*; it is not often caught above three or four pounds' weight, but it is delicious eating, is very game, and affords good sport at dusk and in the early hours of the morning. In many places it will take a fly, preferring a large white-winged one with a red or yellow body, but here it is best caught with paste made of flour and water. That is soon ready, and we make a cast where a slight purl in the water betokens the presence of a hungry *baikri*. When on the feed he is bold and fearless, and the bait has scarcely time to sink before it is seized and the sensation of a vigorous tug, so delightful to the angler worn out with waiting for perverse fishes to change their minds, comes trembling down the rod. A quick stroke drives the hook home, and the *baikri* with an angry shake of his head makes for the bottom. But he is soon checked, and in the next few minutes is gasping out his life at our feet. A few more rapid casts with varying success and the sport is over. Darkness has settled over the scene, and with darkness has come a silence that is accentuated by the metallic clicking of our reels as we roll up our lines and turn to leave the stream.

G. A. LEVETT-YEATS.

GOLF.

(THE MAN AND THE BOOK).

THERE are as many ways of playing golf as of constructing tribal lays, and every single one of them is right. In the brave days of old, before Colonel Bogey invaded the land, when the monthly medal was yet unknown, when golf was happy in having no history, no bibliography of which to boast, it mattered nothing whether a man drove off the right leg or off the left, whether he took his club back slow or fast, whether his elbow at the top of the swing came above his shoulder or below. Tom Morris, Alan Robertson, and other heroes of old played by the light of nature with almost as many methods as there were men, and surely they played the game.

But the volume on Golf in the Badminton Library and the bibliography of which it was the pioneer, have changed all that. Golf ceased to be a pastime, and became a science with its postulates, its axioms, its formulas. Every stroke was reduced to a dead uniformity of execution. A perfect Deuteronomy of commandments was declared: Thou shalt not do this, and that; and thus far shalt thou go and no further. The most minute directions were given for an endless number of movements and positions necessary for each separate stroke. Wrist, elbow, head, shoulders, feet had to be in a definite place at a definite moment. One was reminded of the old drill-books of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with their forty or so words of command in place of the modern *Ready, Present, Fire*. How many a good golfer

solemnly and seriously read the Badminton book, and was plunged into a sudden Avernus of bunkers and despair, from which it took him many a weary month to recover. To win one's way from a bunker of sand is no easy task, but where is the niblick that will free the despondent golfer from the bunkers of despair?

The Badminton Library bears a great burden of responsibility. It seemed at first such a pleasant and useful task to pore over scientific theories of a game by night with a view to putting them into practice on the following day. It is not everyone who can read a book of this type with the equanimity of the late Mr. Palmer of Dirleton, a typical Scotch dominie, and a typical golfer of the old school. In his younger days, some forty years or so ago, he and his son could match any two players in the south of Scotland; but when one of the younger generation presented him with the Badminton book on Golf, he was old enough to refrain from taking it seriously. As a good Presbyterian he was fond of describing it as the Thirty-nine Articles of Golf. To the end the old man did his round a day, and when he sent a topped shot off the tee would say to the donor of the book, with a twinkle in his eye, "Bless ma soul, if a didna forget rule 27 for driving!"

Not every one, however, can treat this literature with so light a heart, and if at times the experienced player is distracted by it, what of the poor

beginner? The new golfer, knowing nothing of theories or of the game, after a successful preliminary putt with an umbrella, has a golf-stick, as he styles it, thrust into his hands and proceeds to address the ball in the most hap-hazard style. With his first shot he may miss altogether, but the chances are that his second is a fine though erratic drive, and in cheerful innocence he may play a reckless dashing round with many a mistake, but for all that a round full of hope and promise. Then nothing can preserve him from the advice of his friends. One tells him to put his right foot forward, another his left; one tells him to grip more with his right hand, another with his left hand, and so forth. But the fatal moment is when some misguided, though well-meaning, friend lends him the Badminton book on Golf.

Along with this book he probably studies instantaneous photographs in the *BOOK OF GOLFERS* or in his weekly *GOLF ILLUSTRATED*, which makes a special feature of instruction by illustration. Now there is nothing more absolutely misleading than an instantaneous photograph. The photograph shows not the complete action, but merely an arrested moment of the whole. No one would imagine that a trotting horse has at any moment one leg stiff as a poker on the ground and the other three in the air. Yet such is indisputably the case; and just as it is impossible to get from photographs a proper impression of how a horse trots, so it is impossible to learn how to drive from studying an instantaneous photograph of Vardon or Braid at some instant of their swing. The victim of golf-literature looks at six photographs of professionals driving and will tell you that, "There isn't a man in the Club who has his left leg absolutely straight

like that at the top of the swing." He forgets that the human eye sees things differently from the camera. The camera depicts an isolated instant, whereas the eye takes in a coherent impression of the entire action.

The cheapness of reproducing photographs is responsible for much of the modern making of books, from illustrated periodicals to Jubilee books of games. For what applies to golf applies equally to cricket and other sports. The game is treated as a science instead of a pastime, and the instantaneous photograph is employed as a method of instruction. The beginner, or indeed the practised player, can learn nothing from an impossible picture of Mr. Ranjitsinhji executing his famous glancing stroke with bat held perpendicularly in front of his silk-clad breast. If we must have instruction by illustration let it be by means of the cinematograph, which would at least display the entire action involved in each stroke. A cinematograph showing the final round of the Championship at St. Andrews, or an innings of a hundred runs by Mr. Fry, would be a really instructive and popular entertainment for a winter's night at a golf or cricket club. The single photograph is useless, but the public is only a grown-up child that still wants its picture-books; and now that process-plates from photographs are so much more speedily and cheaply produced than drawings, publishers are only too ready to gratify the popular taste. It must be noted, however, that even the modern draughtsman has fallen under the evil influence of the instantaneous photograph. You will see, especially in the best of the American magazines, horses drawn in eccentric attitudes absolutely unknown to the human eye, with the

result that the poor brutes look as if they were in a fit of the staggers rather than galloping. The old convention of drawing the galloping horse with its legs spread wide out, however false it may have been, was far more satisfactory and convincing to the eye. Even the Royal Academy in its Students' Competition a year ago awarded its first prize to a picture of Ladas falling dead as he goes to receive the crown of victory. The dropping figure of the athlete might well have been from a snap-shot, but worse than this was the fact that the wreath was actually shown suspended in mid air as it fell from the judge's hand to the ground. To such an extent is our national art degraded.

To return to the golfer, it is surely no wonder that under the influence of literature and photographs he becomes a man of theory. Always playing by the book he rarely makes a natural stroke. He fidgets about as he addresses the ball, seeing an imaginary diagram on the ground. He takes his club stiffly and slowly back, probably stops at the top of his swing, and then wonders if the ball goes off at a tangent to the right. What is worse, he often becomes a bore. To sum up his character after the manner of Theophrastus:

Your theoretical golfer is he whose much reading hath made him somewhat mad. He weareth a frown, and also talketh no little both of himself and of golf. After he hath played three rounds of the links he will set down seven balls some fifty yards from the home green, and strive, not without difficulty, to understand for what reason he failed to play even such a shot at the thirteenth and at other greens. In this way having cut much turf he will go homewards and cut also his drawing-room carpet, and will make trial of twelve new irons and mashies with which Taylor and other men can play approach-shots in deed and

not in word. His handicap is 15, and both on other occasions and when he imbibeth tea with three scratch players and a plus 4 man will he expound the only correct method of playing a half-iron shot, of putting due cut upon a ball, and similar things.

Now if such is the effect of too much theory, how is the helpless beginner or the mature player, who is "off his game," to find salvation? The answer lies in the word *imitation*, the *μίμησις* which Aristotle laid down as the basis of all artistic production. It is a primitive and savage instinct, this of imitation, but even in these civilised days it plays no unimportant part in our lives. You see it displayed in a hundred ways. Look at a small child with her little frock scarcely below her knees, and watch with what an air she gathers it up to cross a muddy road, in unconscious imitation of her elders. Look at a lady who stands watching the dancers in a ball-room, and note the slight sway of the body, the quick movement of the foot. Or watch the finish of the high jump at any athletic sports, and mark how among the mass of the spectators there is a lift of the foot and a heave of the head, as the jumper rises from the ground. Even in the stalls of a London theatre, in spite of the apathy and self-control of modern society, you will sometimes see this primitive instinct intruding itself, merely a frown on someone's brow, a tightened fist, a movement of the hand, a tear in an eye.

Now the way to learn golf is to forget yourself and your theories, and to give free flight to this natural instinct of imitation. Play, when you can, with some one better than yourself, and absorb his style just as the child absorbs the grace with which her elder sister gathers up her skirts. If your partner be a first-rate player, do not stand with a scowl wondering

why you were such a fool as to waste eight strokes on the last hole. Watch instead the certainty with which he takes his position. There is no fidgeting with the feet, the few inches this way or that make no fatal difference. Watch his easy swing; watch how his eye remains fixed upon the ball; above all, watch his "follow through." Absorb the human being, and not the book. Give free play to the instinct of imitation, and you are on the road to success.

You may go through much tribulation, but the best of it is that to all alike, good player or bad, the game still has its fascination. *Non omnia possumus omnes*,—we cannot all go round under eighty strokes,—but good and bad, old and young, each in his own way can play the game. It was my fortune recently to be standing near an elderly gentleman who was playing with his daughter. The old man was slow and deliberate in every movement, and some players behind were obviously fretting at the delay he caused. The daughter ventured to suggest to her father that they should give up the hole and pass on to the next tee. "Give up the hole!" was the indignant reply, "I'll do nothing of the sort; I've only played *thirteen*!" Nor need there be any distinction, such as was made by a green-keeper in Scotland, who was asked one day recently how many people were out playing. His reply was: "There's juist twa gowfers and three meenisters here the day."

For one and all, good player and bad, old and young, minister or layman, there is the charm of the fresh air and exercise that the game entails. The dweller in cities can forget the weariness, the fever and the fret of business life. Surely it is with pure delight, all unalloyed with party spirit, that the politician surveys the cheerful landscape of Tooting Bec with his opponent of the opposite bench two down and one to play in the foreground. The world has no cares for the man who is "dormie two" with a blue sky overhead, the green links beneath his foot, and the sound of the sea in his ears. One can appreciate the impassioned cry coming straight from a Scotchman's heart:

O it's terrible lang sin syne
Since I had a sicht o' the sea,
An' I'm wearyin' sair for a roun'
O' the links i' the North Countree.

O I'm wearyin' sair for a roun'
On the links o' my ain countree,
For the bunkers o' 'saun' and the lone
green lan',
An' the soun' an' the smell o' the
sea.

One and all may know this delight, and one and all may strive after that perfection which has been granted to one or two alone, to Vardon perhaps in the highest degree, a perfection that never will be attained by the working out of theories or the establishment of golf among the exact sciences. Golf is an instinct, an inspiration, an art.

MARTIN HARDIE.

DINNERS AND DINERS.¹

THE art of dining has never lacked criticism or panegyric. Poets have sung its praises, philosophers have analysed its pleasures. The famous banquets of the world are as familiar to us as the famous battles, and when the erudite Johannes Stuckius set out to compose his treatise *DE ANTIQUORUM CONVIVIIS* he assuredly did not lack material. Already the subject had engrossed the profound intellect of Plutarch; already Athenæus, the king of pedants, had obscured the gay science with ill-digested knowledge; and the whole literature of the ancients had been ransacked for the lightest allusion to the cooking of meat, upon which the life of man still depends. Meanwhile the art of cookery was remade, following through all the centuries the style and taste which governed the other arts. Barbarous in the Gothic age, it took on a new refinement with the Renaissance, and from Louis the Fourteenth to the Revolution it followed the lines of splendour and restraint which controlled the chairs and tables of the feast.

Nor did its literature decline with the years. Eloquence grew with ingenuity, and a larger library was devoted to cooking than to all the other arts together. Brillat-Savarin was the first of the moderns to treat the subject with a proper deference. Now, he was gifted with the two qualities of gay philosophy and grave enthusiasm most necessary to the

critic of the table. He offered no foolish excuse for the most legitimate of pleasures, but discoursed of dining as though it were the first duty of the wise. "The Creator," said he, "in compelling man to eat that he may live, invites him to the feast by appetite, and rewards him by pleasure." Thus he wrote with the playful seriousness of his time, making epigrams spiced with truth, as a leg of mutton should be spiced with garlic, and touching upon first principles with the lightest of light fingers. That the discovery of a new dish confers a greater happiness upon the human race than the discovery of a new star seems a paradox, but it is the simple statement of a fact. At any rate M. Brillat-Savarin approached the kitchen in a spirit of reverence, and if his treatise is not a sternly practical guide, at least it teaches us how to dine like philosophers.

Brillat-Savarin somewhere confesses that in the use of words he was a Romantic. It amused him, he said, to uncover hidden treasures; yet where his own art was concerned he preached a gospel of stern classicism. Presently indeed, the romantic movement was to exercise a baneful influence upon the table, substituting orgies for dinners, and inventing dishes, strange and incongruous as Gautier's waistcoats or as the furniture of Gerald de Nerval. Read Dumas's treatise, for instance, and you will note the vices of gluttony and extravagance. But taste returned to the paths of sanity, and Byzantine though our age has been styled, at any rate it insists on

¹ *DINNERS AND DINERS*; by Colonel Newnham-Davis: a new, enlarged, and revised edition. London, 1901.

dining with restraint, and believes with Brillat-Savarin that those who permit themselves indigestion or drunkenness know neither how to eat nor how to drink.

Nevertheless he is a bold man who to-day instructs his fellows where and how they shall dine. Though we all eat, a sort of cant persuades too many of us to preserve a silence concerning the pleasures of the table. The cant, of course, pretends to find a justification in the sin of gluttony, but no pleasure deserves condemnation because it may be abused. The vulgar man delights in jewels, chains, and gaudy ties, but his excesses are no reproach to him who is careful to dress himself like a gentleman; and as the over-dressed rascal is to the dandy, so is the glutton to him who dines with a wise moderation. But we would not in our admiration of a well-composed dinner find the smallest excuse for the glutton who gorges when he should dine. Gluttony, both in practice and effect, is the most sordid of the vices, and while he who indulges therein is a dull companion, he presently assumes the size and habit of the hog. Useless to his friends, since he knows not geniality, the glutton speedily becomes a torment to himself. "As a lamp is choked with a multitude of oil," wrote a philosopher many years ago, "or a little fire with overmuch wood quite extinguished, so is the natural heat with immoderate eating strangled in the body." But it is not of the glutton that we would write; we merely recall him because his existence has brought discredit upon a delicate art, and because we would give Colonel Newnham-Davis, whose DINNERS AND DINERS is composed with a proper enthusiasm, credit not only for knowledge but for courage as well.

Colonel Davis, then, is more of

a guide than of a philosopher. He prefers practice to theory, and if we follow him through the mazes of London, we may now and again dine indifferently, but we need never spend a dull evening. In London, truly, there are many methods of dining, and many prices. On the one hand is the simple chop, cooked to a turn upon a visible grill; on the other is a dinner, designed by Joseph or Paillard, which could not be excelled upon the boulevards. Yet every man, with a guinea or two in his pocket, cannot dine. He must be shepherded to the proper place, and he must be taught to order, or at least to control the ordering, of a dinner. And here it is that Colonel Davis comes to his aid, not with the philosophy of Brillat-Savarin, but with practical counsel and sound information. To order a dinner is as difficult a task as man is ever called upon to perform; and yet he who shrinks from the task has no right to entertain a guest. "To eat a *table d'hôte* dinner," says the Colonel, "is like landing a fish which has been hooked and played by somebody else;" and we quite agree with him.

Yet when the novice faces the *maître d'hôtel*, how shall he conduct himself? The dishes which go to make up a dinner are so few, the choice is so narrow, that the giver of the feast must be ingenious indeed if he would give a personal touch to his performance. The conditions of the game exclude a wild originality, and originality is always easier to compass than a new arrangement of existing materials. The questions that suggest themselves are endless. What shall be the *hors d'œuvre*,—caviar or oysters? That depends on an infinity of considerations,—the time of year, the dishes which follow, the temperament of the

guests, and what not. But it is the very difficulty of the problem which makes it worth solving. Again, suppose yourself confronted by the manager of a restaurant, and asked what soup you will choose. Does not the beginner feel shamed into saying, "I will leave it all to you"? Yet if he say so, he will never give a dinner worthy himself or his friend. The difficulty, of course, is not insuperable. If the natural gift be there, practice may speedily bring it out, especially when the practice is guided by the wisdom of so highly accomplished a mentor as Colonel Davis. Yet now and again we are inclined to differ from him. He is never tired of condemning such simple soups as *petite marmite* or *croûte au pot*. He finds them, says he, in every bill of fare, and he sternly reproves the lack of imagination which prefers these homely soups to something stranger and more elegant. But it is not lack of imagination which chooses the simplest soups. For it is in them that fancy may most eloquently be expressed. The more simple the soup, the harder is it to make, and only the greatest cook can compose a distinguished *croûte au pot*, as only the greatest poets can fittingly express the commonplace. Nor is Colonel Davis supported by M. Joseph, the real hero of his book, since we note with pleasure that when this artist designed a little dinner at the Savoy, he opened it with a soup somewhat recklessly censured by his client.

The truth is that a soup, like the exordium of a speech, should be scrupulously quiet. No cook (nor any orator) desires to reach his climax at the outset, and for this reason *bisque* is apt to spoil a delicate repast. Excellent in itself, it does not always harmonise with what follows, and often exhausts the palate, as an

epigram in the first phrase robs a speech's peroration of its due effect. Indeed, the perfect dinner is an assemblage of dishes, each of which leads imperceptibly to what comes after, and it is clear that the art of the diner, like all the other arts, depends for perfection upon appropriateness and simplicity. To follow a *bisque* by a lobster, or a *chateaubriand* by a woodcock, is as violent a fault of taste as a lapse in grammar. Yet simplicity is a greater virtue even than appropriateness, and simplicity never found a more zealous champion than Colonel Davis. He upholds it for our admiration on every page, and better still he quotes in support the opinion of M. Joseph, than whom Europe holds no sounder authority. Now M. Joseph believes, with the elder Pliny, that many dishes bring many diseases. "In England you taste your dinners," says the incomparable artist, "you do not eat them. The artist who is confident of his art only puts a small dinner before his clients. It is a bad workman, who slurs over his failures by giving many dishes." That is perfectly true; the love of size persuades the new-made millionaire to order large dinners, large houses, and large canvases. It persuades the newly educated to demand large head-lines, vast sensations, and long novels. But M. Joseph practises what he preaches, and he designed for Colonel Davis such a dinner as rightly expresses his conviction. Perhaps we may set it down, for it proves our point more clearly than would a page of argument. Here, then, is the little banquet offered at the Savoy:

Petite Marmite.

Sole Reichenberg.

Caneton à la presse. Salade de Saison.

Fonds d'artichauts à la Reine.

Bombe pralinée. Petits Fours.

Panier fleuri.

After such a dinner no man could be either hungry nor surfeited, and to think of it is to regret that London knows M. Joseph no more, that to contemplate his artistry one must cross the Channel, and find in the Rue Marivaux what is now denied to the Savoy.

But Colonel Davis's treatise not only tells us how to dine ; it reminds us how great a change has come over this London of ours. Time was when an Englishman's house was his castle, when he firmly believed that a mutton chop eaten at his own fireside was infinitely better than all the French kickshaws in the world, when he gaily quoted Thackeray's lines,—

Dear Lucy, you know what my wish
is,—

I hate all your Frenchified fuss :
Your silly entrées and made dishes
Were never intended for us—

and thought that the last word had been said. He ate vily ; he could not call it dining ; and he was content, because his patriotism did not suffer. But he has learned a lesson in the last thirty years, and if economy still keeps him at home, he celebrates as many occasions as he can by a little dinner at a restaurant. The consequence is that France, Italy, and Germany have invaded us. You may now dine at any price you like, and after the custom of whatever country suits you best. If you wish to wash down sausage and *sauerkraut* with the best Spaten beer, you may do it at a moderate price ; if you prefer macaroni and Chianti, there is no quarter of the town in which you cannot satisfy your desire ; and "the High French kitchen," of various degrees, may be encountered wherever an hotel hangs out its sign. The quality of the cooking is not always admirable, but at least there is a pretence of invention, which goes

further than an underdone joint and boiled potatoes.

The Franco-German War, as if to prove that no disaster was without a compensation, inaugurated the newer method. The poor exiles, languishing for their fatherland and depressed by the fog which they detect in London on the sunniest day, would have perished miserably had not the Café Royal been established for their benefit. But once established, the Café Royal attracted the wise men of our own race, and thus it was that the English were taught to dine after a wiser and a better fashion. For there can be no doubt that there is but one art of cookery in the world,—the art of France. Other countries have their own dishes, their own moments of inspiration. The soups of Russia have been honoured by adoption in the capital of the allied nation, while the roe and sinews of sturgeon are universally esteemed ; the saffron and garlic of Spain are our common property ; and the Swedish *smorgasbrod*, though it has never travelled south, is a hero's way of beginning a banquet. But there is no country which does not owe its kitchen to France, whose very language alone can describe a dinner in adequate terms. And while at the palaces described by Colonel Davis any Englishman may eat a perfect dinner, he cannot taste the unalloyed pleasure which the same dinner would give him in Paris. There may be something in the atmosphere ; there is more in the method of presentation. In London the *maitre d'hotel*, a Frenchman of course, is constrained to speak English, and is then hampered in the discharge of a delicate duty. But it is the manner in which a dinner is served that puts upon it the perfect finish. M. Joseph, quoted by Colonel Davis,

declares that "a dish learnedly prepared by an incomparable cook might pass unseen, or at least unappreciated if the *maitre d'hotel*, who becomes for the nonce a kind of stage-manager, did not know how to present the masterpiece in such a fashion as to make it desirable." In other words, the *maitre d'hotel* must not only understand the composition of every dish which he places before his clients, he must have the suave diplomacy which shall add a proper touch of intimacy, and which shall persuade the amateur that the skill and fancy lavished upon the dish has been lavished for him, and for him only. But England has never produced a *maitre d'hotel*. Head-waiters we have innumerable, and excellent they are, shrewd, confidential, quick of memory, admirable gossipers, even witty. Yet they lack the air of distinction, of smiling dignity, which enables such a *maitre d'hotel* as M. Joseph to persuade the diner that he is eating a dinner prepared for his peculiar palate.

But, if Englishmen cannot set a dinner upon the table with the delicate skill of a Frenchman, what shall we say of our English kitchen? Nothing, save that it is *simplex munditiis*, plain in its neatness. It is, moreover, dying in the restaurants of London. It lingers in old-fashioned clubs and in old-fashioned taverns. There are haunts in which you may find a beef-steak pudding unrivalled, and if you are very hungry you may eat it with pleasure. But France and Italy have carried away the palm, and of the innumerable restaurants mentioned by Colonel Davis there are but half-a-dozen which respect the traditions of the old English kitchen. The patriot will find it a sorrowful confession, and it is the more sorrowful, because the raw materials of a banquet are better and cheaper in London than

in Paris. But we need not take our inferiority to heart. We can eat the best of French dinners in London, although they do not taste quite the same on the banks of the Thames as on the boulevards and quays of Paris; and we may soothe our vanity by the reflection that the heroes of Homer understood not the art of cooking, that Ulysses and Achilles and the rest were quite content with beef, if only there were enough of it.

There is yet another reason why the English cannot taste their dinner as they should. They are careless of their appetite, for not content with dulling their palate with tea in the afternoon, they lunch so late that hunger appeased often shrinks from the task of dinner. Burton in his *ANATOMY OF MELANCHOLY* complained that the colleges of Oxford did not allow seven hours to elapse between dinner and supper, and the epicure who lunches at two is hardly ready to dine at eight. The French arrange their life with a wiser forethought. He who breakfasts at twelve may dine at half-past seven; and not only is he prepared for the climax of the day, his dinner, but to balance it he must needs invent another delicate work of art,—the breakfast, which might well suggest an interesting treatise to Colonel Davis.

However, there is one ingredient common to every meal, French or English, and that is conversation. The Colonel, we think, treats this branch of his subject somewhat carelessly; his humour too often degenerates to an idle levity. It is well to know where to dine; it is also important to understand with whom to dine. We have no right to choose our company without thought. At dinner a man should be in his best humour, since his work is finished, and he lives only to please his senses. Fatigue has not overtaken him; ex-

citement has not dulled his wits nor turned them to hysteria. He has no right to frolic, as at supper, nor to be dumb as at an early breakfast. He must pay his shot by a due interchange of talk. What shall he talk about? Plutarch once discussed at considerable length the question whether men should discourse of philosophy at table, and he decided, if we remember rightly, that there was no objection so long as philosophy was treated in the spirit of gaiety. And the decision is wise enough. All things are fit food for converse, so long as they are handled with a lightness proper to the occasion, philosophy, gossip, letters, or sport. But two reservations may be made: no man should be held to an opinion flung across the dinner-table, nor should he ever be reminded of a thoughtless jest uttered under the genial influence of a French cook. Otherwise, talk is imperative, the quick talk which pierces like a sword-thrust and is as easily parried. For this reason, only a savage would dine to the music of a

band. There is more than one restaurant in London in which conversation is silenced by the noisy rattle of worn-out tunes. We have even heard diners so lost to shame that they added their chorus to the noise of the Hungarians, green, blue, or yellow. Now, this outrage may cover the imbecility of those who dine without thought or without joy; it cannot be resented too bitterly by men of sense. And after the dinner comes the bill, as Colonel Davis reminds us, heavy most often and (let us hope) always cheerfully paid. But even when it is paid, there remains something still. "The thought that a great *chef* had given to composing a dish," we quote the Colonel's own words, "the minute care with which the dinner had been prepared and served, could not be put down in money value; they are the courtesies that the professors of an art pay to an enthusiastic student." With which expression of proper gratitude we take leave of an intelligent and entertaining book.

OVER THE SLEEPING CITY.

AN hour before midnight the west of London even in the summer-time is quieting down rapidly. The main thoroughfares still rumble with traffic and the omnibuses still continue to ply, but in lesser numbers, rattling past with few passengers at a brisker pace than would be possible, or prudent, in daylight. It was on the roof of one of these, following the route of Knightsbridge and the Fulham road, that on an evening in last August I travelled four pleasant miles, easily and with enjoyment of the cool fresh air, from crowded St. James's to the far side of the bridge at Chelsea station where the suburb of Fulham begins.

As I alighted, the giant voice of Westminster was tolling out the hour with a distant solemn roar unknown in busy hours. A hush was fast settling down on the great city. The darkening of the shop-fronts had already thrown the streets into partial gloom. Little groups of men stood at the street-corners where tavern-lights still flared, but these were thinning rapidly. A hundred yards back from the roadway on the northern side, out on the quiet turf of the athletic ground, you are away from the glare of lamps and the concourse of man, and for all that can be seen or heard London is not. Three hours previously I had stood on the same spot in broad daylight anxiously watching, sprawled on the turf and surrounded by a busy crowd, a writhing mass of parti-coloured silk and netting within whose folds gas had just been turned on from a large main. On the same spot now,

deserted, solemn, majestic, uprose a huge shapely globe blotting out the sky.

Presently comrades came dropping in by twos and threes, and the talk was of the venture in hand; for in the small hours there was to be a balloon-ascent, and probabilities and possibilities were being keenly discussed. After another three hours would there be sufficient lifting-power without the introduction of more live gas? This was an important question, since the gas-man had gone home to bed an hour ago taking his key with him. Would the night-dew condense too heavily on the cold silk? Would the wind rise or veer, or, worse, would it die out altogether with midnight? A sky-voyage on a moonless night was not to be too lightly embarked on with miles on miles of house-tops around and a winding river broad and black to leeward. Then again the speed of the upper currents was unknown, and the sea lay across Kent only sixty miles away. Indeed, should our course be for the Hope Light-house the water we should reach in less than thirty miles would, for all the efforts to escape that we could make, be practically the open sea for us. But auguries were favourable and satisfied at last the little band quit the wet grass,—the three aeronauts to simulate sleep stretched on the benches of the grand stand beneath improvised coverlets, the rest to disappear mysteriously somewhere. Two hours later we found them (having by that time sated ourselves with the pleasing delusion that we had

been resting) congregated in a shed dimly lit with candles stuck in niches round the walls, telling stories and singing songs,—just as you will find true English spirits the world over, and more particularly such genuine comrades, willing volunteers all, as had come to aid in launching us skyward and see us well away. And it was already time for action. The night, though dark, was clear, and away in the north-north-east the sun, with its shallow dip below the horizon somewhere behind the neighbouring great wheel in Earl's Court, was brightening the sky-line ruled level with far roof-ridges. In two hours the dawn would be breaking to those who should be sailing above the clouds.

Once in the car you seem to belong already to another element, while your craft resents all connection with earth. But lately a tumbled mass twisted and wrinkled, it is now shapely as a bird, a thing of beauty, nobly proportioned, and like a true creature of the air is struggling for release, sweeping and writhing, but with perfect grace, as a score of men hold her in check. At last she is free, but for one restraining rope, when her motion is closely watched. How does she take her flight? Of this only those who stand without can well judge. From within you lose sight of the earth in the darkness, and are unconscious of any motion upwards or downwards. There is no sensation, but the occasional tugging and quivering of the rope. Thus it is an unwelcome surprise to find oneself returned to earth with an unpleasant jolt. When this has been repeated a few times the desire is not to avoid it by getting out, but with all speed to be rid of rude earth altogether. And the moment has now come. We rise once more, still a trifle too reluctantly; so a bag is dropped entire, and a long

second elapses before its thud is heard on the turf, showing us that the earth is at last being left for good. And so at last we slip our cable, amid the cheers of the little crowd below.

The enclosure we are quitting does not exceed the limits of an ordinary foot-ball ground, but its black area is doubled by the night, and we seem to be rising out of some vast chasm into the lesser darkness of the sky. But our motion, though upward, is slanting with the wind, and in another moment out of the gloom the maze of street-lamps bursts upon us, for we have cleared the nearest houses, and stand away over the Fulham Road, rising yet and quickening our speed as we catch the currents of the upper air. And now (the first duty of the careful aeronaut) we can guess at our direction. The Fulham Road lies toward the north-east, and we have crossed it at so broad an angle as to make it morally certain that we shall land in Kent. The river, however, should be another guide, since at our reckoning we should traverse it directly, nearly at right angles, and but little above Battersea Bridge. And we are not without further guidance. From some street far down a voice reaches us; a foot-passenger has sighted our dark mass against the starlight, and a short colloquy ensues, cast in hasty sentences, as to our direction.

But our friend is already behind us, cut off by blocks of houses, for we are rising in the faster currents, and are skimming over the roofs and roadways briskly. Turning now and looking ahead, the houses below have come to an end, and the lines of stars in the streets have left a broad blank in which all is darkness, save for bright or coloured gleams here and there, spreading a rippling glare around; save too for certain narrow double lines dotted in with brilliant

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points, crossing the dark channel and repeating themselves at almost regular intervals again and again away into dim distance. We are about to cross the river, which thus betrays itself together with its various craft bearing signal-lamps, and its bridges brilliantly lighted. Soon we are out over mid-stream floating high aloft, where not a plash or murmur makes itself heard. A river in flood appeals to us by its wild grandeur and the uproar of tossing waters; yet even so it can hardly impress one more than does this night view of Thames with its solemn sweep through silent London.

When the far bank is reached, and houses are under us once more, there is an altered aspect of the streets, due probably to our increased altitude. The roadways lie in dark lines along their length, but having an ill-defined fringe on either side as of frosted silver. The explanation is not hard to find. The surface of smooth flag-stones is more reflective than that of the trodden road, and the beams of street-lamps are faintly thrown back to us off the pavements. But speedily, as we look sheer down, the illumined town has once more terminated abruptly in a vacant space of large dimensions with straight and clean-cut boundaries. We are crossing an angle of Battersea Park, and this is no sooner passed than there opens out on our right another large dark gap whose curious figure, an elongated triangle, puzzles us. It can hardly be a reservoir, for the familiar tanks of Battersea are on our left; neither is there any recreation-ground nearer than Kennington; nor in this part of London is there any burial-plot save the huge oblong of Brompton far behind. We are not long left in perplexity. Trailing through the black gap is seen a lurid flare fringed with silver, and a shriek comes up

breaking the silence painfully. One is apt to forget how much open space a railway claims, especially near a busy terminus.

The engine puffing below us in the delta of the London and South-Western Railway is doing shunting work, and now blows a familiar call, not a sustained hooting but a *toot-a-too* in broken blasts. Some impulse moved me to imitate the signal with a powerful reed horn which I carried, and this provoked such a prompt response from below us to make it clear that we were sighted by the engine-driver, and were being challenged to a competition which indeed straightway ensued. Then some driver down the line joined in, and next a bargeman on the river caught the inspiration, and contributed a dismal piping on a wheezy whistle. And in a minute's space, up and down the stream, a score of vessels swelled the chorus, answering each toot from the sky with a fiendish discord. The very sensible interval between the challenge and the response was an indication of our distance from the earth. A still better measure of altitude, up to a thousand feet or more, is to be found in echo off the surface of the ground below, and practically any surface will serve if proper appliances are used. An aneroid can at best only tell the height a balloon may be riding at as compared with that of the place of departure. It can take no account of hills or depressions, nor can these be judged otherwise from above, since to the eye the earth presents only a dead level. On the other hand the interval occupied by echo carefully noted supplies a true measure of the gulf between the observer and the ground below him. An outlying reservoir of the Southwark and Vauxhall water-works is beneath us, and a blast of the horn brings back an

echo of astounding strength and volume; for no better reflecting surface for sound exists than that of a sheet of unruffled water,—a fact obviously only confided to the aeronaut. We are beyond the range of voice now and it is a favourable opportunity for testing by means of echo the quality of the night air over London as a vehicle for sound. The myriad chimneys below are innocent of smoke, and in the small dead hours the air around is equable. With what ears then will the silent city receive a summons from the sky?

A horn is used, so constructed as to concentrate its sound in one path, and leaning well over the car one blows a blast perpendicularly downwards, while another listens with an ear-trumpet. We are upwards of a thousand feet high, a distance greater than between the shores of the river at Westminster Bridge; yet the echo comes back with a burst, quickly ending but painful to the ear by its very intensity. Roofs and roadways lying square to the blast have all replied in one united recoil. The horn is now directed at an angle slanting downwards, with a result strikingly changed and beautiful. The note is prolonged, continuous, and always true. It is like the long-drawn-out note of some wild harp-string slowly dying. Later in the same night, when we were far out in the open country, a remarkable effect was observed for which I can obtain no explanation. Held at a certain angle the horn awoke a near full echo of its true note; then followed a slight interval after which a second echo came back, not only fainter but appreciably raised in pitch.

We have been in the sky now for some twenty minutes and our sensations bid us believe that we are in a warm and genial atmosphere. An hour ago thermometers, suspended a

few feet above the ground, registered 57° in the enclosure of Stamford Bridge, yet the night felt raw and, clinging to our wraps, we were glad to keep ourselves in motion. Now, though unsheltered on all sides and without the power of exercise, an overcoat is almost a burden. It becomes interesting to test accurately the actual temperature of the air around us, that is, of the strata lying over Clapham at, say, twice the height of St. Paul's at half-past three on a morning in the middle of August. A bare thermometer-tube, divested of any mounting and merely tied at its upper end to a piece of string, is whirled round at arm's length outside the car for an interval of time sufficient to allow the slender instrument to be brought to the same temperature as that of the air with which it is thus brought in rapid contact. The result shows that despite the evidence of our senses the night air remains precisely the same as when we left the earth. The feeling of increased warmth is partly due to our travelling with the wind and thus encountering no draught; but it may be attributed yet more to our being removed from the low-lying layers of moisture,—a strong argument in favour of elevated situations. At a higher altitude we should probably meet with yet warmer strata, for the baking heat of the previous day, stored up to our discomfort through long hours in the pavements and walls and roofs of our dwellings, has now risen above the housetops, tempering the upper air. A striking proof of this awaits us, for, though we have thrown out no ballast, our balloon is now ascending. The huge silk globe above us, exposing its large surface to the air, is becoming sensibly warmed and dried.

Instinctively drawing deep and invigorating breaths as we soar up-

wards, and with that indefinable exhilaration which no one knows save the mountaineer, we enter a new world, for we have climbed into the early light of dawn, while the face of earth, though still in gloom, begins to wear an altered aspect. We are fast bidding farewell to London, passing out beyond Peckham and Forest Hill into the open fields and gardens of Kent. The spangled floor below is frayed and fretted out in lines and patches of fading lights. To the north and west stretches the whole extent of London, a broad tract of tiny stars massed together and fading into distance, remotely resembling some portion of the Milky Way when brought to closer range in the field of a large telescope. Here and there are vacancies, the rifts and coal-sacks, as it were; elsewhere are brighter regions, throwing a nebulous haze into the sky, where street-lamps cluster in some busy centre. To the right and left, outside the limits of the city, bright patches of light gleam out in the lower darkness, showing where distant towns are sleeping. These patches are ruddy or white, doubtless according as the light proceeds from burning gas or the glow of electric current.

And to our vision there is another light already in the sky. On the north-east horizon a low level bank of slate shows up with sharp outline against a brightening background. Above it stretches a ribbon of dull red shading off into a fringe of orange, which broadens and brightens as we watch. We have occupied perhaps five minutes in gazing on this new feature when, turning, we see a fresh and greater beauty born within the brief interval. High in the opposite quarter of the heavens the cloud-wreaths of broad stratus have caught the first flush of dawn, and show rose-

red billowy crests with deep purple hollows.

There is a curious chill about the dawn, which must be partly accounted for on physical grounds. Those who have been abroad through the night experience shortly before the sun rises a marked accession of cold, a searching cold,—never more noticeable than in summer—which belongs to no other period of the night. The same may be noticed, more particularly in special climates, at the period when the sun has recently set, and again during the moments of total eclipse. Though that interval is too brief to allow any great diminution of temperature to be shown on recording instruments, yet observers will agree as to a sudden sensation of chilliness as strange as it is real. I think this feeling is less marked in the sky, unless indeed, as I have known, you chance to be in the upper margin of cloud which is evaporating into the warmer air above, in which case the cold is intense.

Nevertheless our balloon (always a most delicate air-thermometer) recorded a fall of temperature as the dawn was breaking in a most palpable manner. It climbed down rapidly, putting back the dawn, and almost before we had time to realise it, we were within five hundred feet of dark green fields below, and dusky woods to right and left. And at that moment the air became full of a twittering sound so widespread and so intense as to produce a most singular and striking effect. It was the noise we were accustomed to hear in summer when the day begins to break and the waking birds are preluding their morning song. But evidently we had caused consternation in the woods, and moreover in our quiet but lofty retreat the subdued sound was gathered in from over wide areas.

Directly afterwards we had occa-

sion to note the same wide-spread calling among another family of the bird-creation. A cock was crowing in some farmyard hard by, the challenge being of course answered by another in another direction, but not by one only. Two or three would be answering at once from different points; further and fainter, and further yet and all around, came the chorus from homesteads unseen and hard to number. Regarding the unbroken stretch of country before us it was impossible to conceive any point within the far horizon where the impetuous uproar just arisen would cease. Rather one must suppose that the whole country-side, a district, a county, nay some large division of England, must be in full crow at that moment. In which case are there any privileged roosts which have a claim to precedence?

An interesting fact relating to the birds was now noticed. A flock, seemingly of wild fowl, was flying at some distance but well above us, and afforded a rare opportunity of testing the height at which birds will fly. Almost invariably high-flying birds shun a balloon, and are nowhere to be seen during a free voyage through the sky. These too were giving us a wide berth, but held their course, apparently a long one, which lay out over the Medway. Their flight must have been at the level of not less than six hundred feet. Misty grey light was flooding the country, growing rapidly and showing objects dimly out to the far horizon; and now

for a brief moment a coppery limb of the sun peered through a rift in the bank of slate, only to retire quickly again. Here and there were signs of rustic life; a small group of figures watching us from a rick-yard; a matron at her cottage door; a labourer trudging heavily to his early toil and showing little interest in our approach. No wonted shouting came from fields and lanes; there was a general apathy everywhere, save indeed among the flocks and herds. In a sheep-fold below us there is the wildest confusion and alarm; horses gallop madly round their enclosures; a neighbouring farmstead is demoralised, even the poultry flying to hide themselves.

With the return of day the task assigned to us, which had been of an experimental nature, terminated, and, reserving our ballast to break the final fall, we allowed our balloon to wander through the skies and settle earthwards at its will. So we sped on with the freshening breeze of sunrise, over the Cobham commons, across the Medway, looking down upon noble Leeds Castle with its ancient towers and broad waters, passing on over the King's Woods till green pastures and ripe cornfields gave place to gardens of hops, a ground which the aeronaut does well to shun. Here, hard by a peaceful village church, in a small rich pasture heavy with morning dew, we regretfully reached our haven.

JOHN M. BACON.

TOM D'URFEY.

LET us glance for a moment at the face that looks amiably out on us from its mighty periwig in a portrait by a certain E. Gouge, that Sir John Hawkins included in his HISTORY OF MUSIC. It is a face handsome enough in its way, the nose a trifle too long perhaps for regularity of features; shrewdness and good temper are mingled in the humorous mouth ready to break into a smile, and the eyes twinkle merrily. It may be that to divert the tedium of posing the sitter entertained the artist with his wealth of song and anecdote, and that the latter caught mouth and eyes at the moment of some new quip or rhyme being evolved. Certainly E. Gouge was not unappreciative of his subject's qualities; indeed, like Mr. Wegg, he dropped into poetry over them and inscribed beneath the portrait the lines that follow:

Whilst D'Urfeys voice his verse does
raise,
When D'Urfeys sings his tuneful lays,
Give D'Urfeys Lyric Muse the bays.

These bays have withered sadly since then, and the tuneful lays are as dead as the voice that trolled them; poor Tom's a-cold these many years for lack of interest to warm his memory. He is but a name to the generality of readers, vaguely associated with English music by some, as vaguely associated with English quack medicine by others, a kind of shadowy Holloway of the past. "D'Urfeys,—D'Urfeys," said somebody to me, "didn't he invent some sort of pills?" "He did," was

the reply, "and an excellent specific they were deemed in his time, but for our squeamish modern digestions they are found a little too strong." As a matter of fact the PILLS TO PURGE MELANCHOLY have only once been reprinted since 1720, an example of a lack of enterprise in publishers that cannot be condoned.

But to return to the compiler of that joyous compendium of lyrics. Grandpapa D'Urfé, a keen Huguenot, not without aristocratic pretensions (witness his *de*), found means to escape from La Rochelle, where the siege was then raging, and took refuge in England, at that time in a sympathetic mood with distressed Protestants and busy with preparing Buckingham's expedition for the relief of the beleaguered city. It was to Devonshire that Monsieur D'Urfé made his way, settling in Exeter with his wife and son, afterwards to be Tom's father. That blameless pastoral poet and warrior, Honoré D'Urfé, Comte de Châteauneuf, Marquis de Valéoméry, Baron de Château-Morand, whose lengthy romance *ASTRÉE* gave so much pleasure to Lady Mary Wortley Montagu, was apparently a brother of the Huguenot refugee and therefore Tom's grand-uncle, not his uncle as stated in THE DICTIONARY OF NATIONAL BIOGRAPHY. Whatever the relationship, Tom was proud of this distinguished relative in particular and of his noble ancestry in general, a pardonable weakness that brought him some banter from his contemporaries. Somehow our English insularity never permits us

to take foreign aristocracies quite seriously. Tom's father married into a good English family, taking to wife one of the Marmions of Huntingdonshire, from which race sprang also Shackerley Marmion the dramatist, one of Ben Jonson's "sons"; and in 1653 Mrs. D'Urfey (by this time apparently the name had assumed its English form) presented her husband with the future songwriter.

Of his boyhood and youth no particulars have survived. If the anonymous author of the squib, *WIT FOR MONEY OR POET STUTTER*, is to be trusted, his classical attainments in later life were of the slightest, and we might infer from this that his education was neglected. But, after all, pamphleteers need not be believed implicitly, and we know that somewhere between 1660 and 1670 Tom was entered at one of the Inns of Court, a process requiring some acquaintance at least with polite learning. Behold him then, a gawky provincial youth, launched from his distant home in the drowsy old episcopal city of the West on the world of London,—the gay London of the Restoration, making up for time lost under the blight of the Commonwealth, its ordeal by fire and plague past, fervent in the business of pleasure, serving a King who from years of dull exile had come into his own again, to be (perhaps in too literal a sense) the father of his people, and to show them by royal example the most witty and amusing fashions of prodigality. For a young man of Mr. D'Urfey's presence and accomplishments such a new environment must have had considerable fascination and influence, so much indeed that he at first grievously neglected the study of the law, and finally forsook it altogether. To blame him would be unduly censorious. When

you are a good-looking young fellow with a pretty taste in wine, women, and dress, literary gifts sufficient for the production of plays for the contemporary stage, and the power of writing popular songs in unlimited quantities and singing them yourself,—when you are all this, is it to be expected that you should spend your youth poring over musty law-books and waiting for a first brief that tarries sadly by the way? By no means, thought Mr. D'Urfey, who was quick to realise his true business. "Let me," he might have said, anticipating Fletcher of Saltoun, "let me make the songs of my country, and I care not who makes the laws." What he did say was: "My good or ill stars ordain'd me to be a knight-errant in the fairy field of poesy."

What fruits the fairy field bore the knight-errant it is difficult to say. If he did not make money rapidly, it was not for lack of industry. In *POET STUTTER* the alarming statement is put into his mouth that he has written seven thousand nine hundred and fifty-three songs, two thousand two hundred and fifty ballads, and nineteen hundred and fifty-six catches, besides madrigals, odes, and other lyrical pieces *ad infinitum*. There is, of course, no necessity to accept this, save in so far as it serves to indicate Tom's amazing fertility. In another place he confesses to having composed more odes than Horace and about four times as many comedies as Terence. Probably the odes and political songs were the most profitable of his productions. The period was in some respects a propitious one for the impecunious minor poet. It was the aristocratic fashion to dabble in letters and the patronage of letters, and professional writers turned the dabbling to account. If it meant nothing more, it meant dinners. My Lord Leicester received Parnassus every

Saturday evening when in town. Leicester House was a good place to go to, but Lord Dorset's establishment was still better, for he had a pleasant way, when in generous mood, of putting new minted guineas beneath the plates of his literary guests.

Tom tasted of these graceful hospitalities with the rest, and with the rest repaid them in dedications and ceremonial Pindarics; thus in one of his songs he celebrates the excellent strong ale on tap at Dorset's country seat of Knole. But the patron of all patrons for him was the Duke of Wharton; at Winchendon he could always depend on a welcome. It was in his honour, so tradition says, that His Grace built in his grounds that temple of conviviality, appropriately named Brimmer Hall:

Fam'd Brimmer Hall, for Beauty,
Music, Wit
New form'd, and only for thy Godhead
fit.

The godhead, I must explain, is Wharton's. The couplet comes from one of Tom's dedications, and the compliment gives some idea of the kind of thing patrons had to stomach in those days, though, judging by the guineas and dinners and convivial temples, they rather liked it than otherwise.

But Tom D'Urfey had other patrons to applaud him, and, what was more important to a poor poet, to signify the same in the manner usual in patrons. It says much for his personal charm that he was able to keep on good terms with no less than four monarchs, Charles the Second, James the Second, William of Orange, and Queen Anne, without once swerving from the Protestant faith. Perhaps none of them took Tom sufficiently seriously to trouble about his religion. With the first he was evidently on a friendly footing. Pardonably proud

of the incident, he remarks in a note to one of his political ditties: "I had the honour to sing it with King Charles at Whitehall: he holding one part of the paper with me." For James he perpetrated one of his terrible Pindaric panegyrics in 1685; for William he composed on the death of Queen Mary a funeral ode, also in the inevitable Pindarics, entitled *GLORIANA*, which must have had, I imagine, the effect of deepening the royal widower's gloom; while on one occasion he so enraptured Queen Anne by singing some rather ribald verses about the Electress Sophia, next heir to the throne, that in the moment's enthusiasm the good Queen handed him fifty guineas.

If Tom was thus the delight of kings and the great ones of the land, his muse was no less beloved by a wider public. As he phrased the matter himself, in that engaging stammer of his which links him with another of the good fellows of English literature, a later and greater ornament of its history: "The town may da-da-damn me for a poet, but they si-si-sing my songs for all that." They did sing his songs. It would have been strange had such tuneful numbers, with sentiments so admirably adapted to the taste of the time, not won instant popularity. Tom himself sang them, and by all accounts sang them well; his impediment of speech disappeared when he wedded his words to music. In this connection Oldys, the antiquarian, tells a story of him that reminds one of the episode of the sailor and the admiral's pig in Michael Scott's romance, *THE CRUISE OF THE MIDGE*. He was in Clare Market one day haggling for a shoulder of mutton. Tom was pertinacious, the butcher obdurate. Finally, to get rid of so unprofitable a customer, the latter said he could have the joint for nothing if he would

only ask for it without stammering. Whereupon our poet, with his ready command of words and melody, burst into extempore song which came without slip or pause, and the mutton was duly handed over.

Tom, as a genial fellow always ready to oblige a company with a song of his own making, was by way of being an idol of gay society. So we may infer from Addison's words: "Many an honest gentleman has got a reputation in his country by pretending to have been in company with Tom D'Urfey." It is, observe, as Tom D'Urfey, not as Thomas D'Urfey, that this delight of royalty, nobility, and honest country gentlemen has come down to us. That lot he shares with certain others, whom the historic tradition, dropping formality, presents to us with the easy familiarity of the diminutive Christian name. It is not every one that bears such uncereemonious handling; who has ever heard of Frank Bacon, or Jack Milton, or Bill Wordsworth? Even the intimates of these eminent persons, I feel, would have hesitated so to take their names in vain. But it is not a mere question of eminence:

Mellifluous Shakespeare, whose enchanting quill
Commanded mirth or passion, was but Will.
And famous Jonson, though his learned pen
Be dipt in Castaly, is still but Ben.

Rather is this question of familiar nomenclature to be explained by the personal popularity of the subject with his friends and contemporaries; he was Tom, Dick, or Harry to them, and as Tom, Dick, or Harry he has reached us.

Tom, then, we may assume, was a welcome guest at any table, and his songs found their way to many a jovial board at which he never sat.

Thus writes Alexander Pope from a country house to his friend Cromwell, under date April 10th, 1710.

I have not quoted one Latin author since I came down, but have learned without book a song of Mr. Thomas D'Urfey's, who is your only poet of tolerable reputation in this country. He makes all the merriment in our entertainments, and but for him there would be so miserable a dearth of catches that I fear they would *sans cérémonie* put either the parson or me upon making some for them. Any man, of any quality, is heartily welcome to the best toping-table of our gentry, who can roundly hum out some fragments or rhapsodies of his works; so that, in the same manner as it was said of Homer to his detractors—What! dares any one despise him who has given so many men to eat?—[meaning the rhapsodists who lived by repeating his verses] so may it be said of Mr. D'Urfey to his detractors—Dares any one despise him who has made so many men drink? Alas, sir! this is a glory which neither you nor I must ever pretend to. Neither you, with your Ovid, nor I, with my Statius, can amuse a whole Board of justices and extraordinary squires, or gain one hum of approbation, or laugh of admiration. These things, they would say, are too studious; they may do well enough with such as love reading, but give us your ancient poet Mr. D'Urfey.

In their ancient poet these rural worthies certainly had one who could tune his supple song to every emotion of which they were capable. Few of his lyrics are indeed of any literary merit; but they have a *verve* and an inextinguishable gaiety that make them excellent as songs, if not as poetry. Tom, honest soul, was no poet; a verse or two here and there amid his multifarious outpourings are but exceptions that prove the rule. But let us not too greatly disparage him. If he is not with the singers of genius, he takes rank with that secondary group of which Béranger is the leading figure. The astonishing fertility of the man is in itself impressive. Hum an air to him, then

give him a scrap of paper and a bottle of wine, and you shall have your song while you wait. It was to his advantage that, in addition to his knack of versification, he had an excellent ear for music and some acquaintance with it. In the dedication to the PILLS TO PURGE MELANCHOLY he speaks with complacency of his double genius for poetry and music. In the case of many, if not most, of his songs the melody was there before the words. Such musical inspirations came from all sources; sometimes it was an old traditional tune, sometimes an Italian *aria* wedded to barbarous Italian words which no honest country gentleman could be expected to understand. In a sense, indeed, he got the better of the Italians: "He has," remarks Addison with dry humour, "made use of Italian tunes and *sonatas* for promoting the Protestant interest and turned a considerable part of the Pope's music against himself." While on the subject of the music of D'Urfev's songs, it should be said, in passing, that not a few of them had the honour of being set by no less a composer than Henry Purcell.

The famous WIT AND MIRTH, OR PILLS TO PURGE MELANCHOLY, is a vast collection that includes not only many of the compiler's own compositions, but also traditional songs and songs by other authors. One or two examples of the former may be quoted to exhibit Tom's range and skill. Here is one, "The Saint in Saint James's Chapel," which will serve as specimen of his *vers de société* manner.

One Sunday at St. James's prayers,
The Prince and Princess by,
I, dress'd with all my whalebone airs,
Sate in the closet nigh.
I bent my knees, I held my book,
I read the answers o'er,
But was perverted by a look
That pierc'd me from the door.

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High thoughts of heaven I came to use
And blest devotion there,
Which gay young Strephon made me
lose
And other raptures share.
He watch'd to lead me to my chair
And bow'd with courtly grace,
But whisper'd love into my ear
Too warm for that grave place.

"Love, love," cried he, "by all ador'd
My fervent heart has won!"
But I, grown peevish at that word,
Desir'd he would be gone:
He went, whilst I that looked his way
A kinder answer meant,
And did for all my sins that day
Not half so much repent.

The next, by way of contrast, represents the rural ditties which form so large a proportion of the collection, though its excellent moral is perhaps unusual.

Dear Jemmy when he sees me upon a
holiday,
When bonny lads are easy and all
a-dancing be,
When tiptoes are in fashion and loons
will jump and play,
Then he too takes occasion to leer
and ogle me,
He'll kiss my hand with squeezing
whene'er he takes my part,
But with each kiss
He crowns my bliss,
I feel him at my heart.

But Jockey with his cattle and pam-
per'd bags of coin
Oft gave poor Jemmy battle, whom,
faith, I wish were mine;
He tells me he is richer and I shall
ride his mare,
That Jemmy's but a ditcher and can
no money spare;
But, welladay, my fancy thinks more
of Jemmy's suit,
I take no pride
To kirk to ride,
I'll gang with him a-foot.

It is fitting to conclude these citations with a couple of verses that in their amiable optimism embody, we may imagine, Tom D'Urfev's philosophy of life.

The famous old prophet, who thirty
years toil'd
To write us the Psalms that Dan
Hopkins hath spoil'd,
In giving account of the ages of men
Has strangely confined us to three
score and ten,
And tells us, to scare us, his last hour
is near
Who enters the sad climacterical year.
Then well is the man who, inspired by
good wine,
Cares neither for seventy nor seven
times nine,
Whose jolly brisk humour adds sands
to his glass,
Who, standing upright, can look fate
in the face,
Who makes much of life, and when
nature is due
Declines like a flower as sweet as it
grew!

To sum up: what can be said of
the PILLS TO PURGE MELANCHOLY?
They are little like to cure the melan-
choly of the moralist, if they do not
rather aggravate his distemper. The
gossip Chamfort tells us how M.
de Conflans was once entertaining
some young courtiers at supper. The
first song of the evening was broad
but not too improper. Thereupon,
however, a certain M. de Fronsac
got on his legs and sang a ditty that
amazed the company, gay as it was.
There was an awkward silence at the
end, broken by the host who ex-
claimed: "Fronsac, you surprise me!
There are ten bottles of champagne
between that song and the first." It
must be confessed that not a few of
the lyrics with which Mr. D'Urfey
charmed his king and countrymen
were of what we may call the ten-
bottle variety. Perhaps it was one
of them, lingering on after a hundred
years of life, that raised the ire of
Colonel Newcome on the occasion of
his visit to the Cave of Harmony.
They were for an age those songs,
an age when the grosser pleasures of
life as well as the finer had literary
celebration; they were not for all

time. We banish them to the top
shelf to keep congenial company with
the too candid chronicler of the
DAMES GALANTES and the garrulous
mentor who taught LE MOYEN DE
PARVENIR.

Even when we turn to D'Urfey's
dramatic works, we are still haunted
by his lyrical facility, for the best
things, it is no exaggeration to say
the only good things, in the score of
plays he fathered are the incidental
songs. One would like to say some-
thing pleasant of Tom's playhouse
efforts, but common honesty forbids
it. His gibes, his gambols, his flashes
of merriment are dull as ditch-water
now, even to a reader conscientious
in his quest of some spark of the
wit that makes the work of some of
Tom's contemporaries, — Congreve,
Wycherley, Vanburgh, Farquhar,
even poor forgotten Mrs. Behn—so
entertaining to a modern reader.
Construction, study of character,
dialogue, in none of these is Tom
successful. As acting plays even,
his productions seem to have achieved
very moderate popularity, though his
staunch patron Charles is said to
have attended three of the first five
nights of *THE PLOTTING SISTERS*, a
record to turn our contemporary
dramatists green with envy. But if
the King admired Tom's stage-work,
the same cannot be said of one
of his most distinguished subjects.
Coming from a first night, somebody
remarked to Dryden: "Was there
ever such stuff! I did not think
that even this author could have
written so ill." "Oh sir," responded
Dryden, "you don't know my friend
Tom; I'll answer for him, he shall
write worse yet." Dryden's friend
Tom was not even given the credit
of originality. Gerard Langbaine,
our chief contemporary authority on
the Restoration drama, thus causti-
cally dismisses him:

A person now living, who was first bred to the law, but left that rugged way for the flowery fields of Poetry. He is accounted by some for an admirable poet, but it is by those who are not acquainted much with authors and therefore are deceived by appearances, taking that for his own wit, which he only borrows from others: for Mr. D'Urfey, like the cuckoo, makes it his business to suck other birds' eggs.

The cuckoo-like propensities are then demonstrated by Langbaine, who amply justifies Dr. Johnson's description of him as "the great detector of plagiarism," with a cruel minuteness which must have been painful to his victim.

Tom had a good deal of other criticism and satire to put up with. There is the inevitable reference in *THE DUNCIAD*: he is mockingly described as "a poet of vast comprehension, a universal genius and most profound learning" in the *Epistle Dedicatory to THE TALE OF A TUB*; and his good friend Richard Steele made fun of his aristocratic pretensions in the pages of *THE LOVER*. But Steele's fun was always good-natured. Tom Brown, who, for all his cleverness as rhymester, essayist, and translator, now shares D'Urfey's oblivion, speaks of him in no amiable fashion. "Thou cur, half-French, half-English breed," is his urbane manner of address in one place; elsewhere he satirically celebrates a bloodless duel fought by our poet at Epsom with a musician called Bell:

I sing of a duel in Epsom befall
"Twixt Fa-sol-la D'Urfey and Sol-la-mi
Bell.

The anonymous dialogue, *WIT FOR MONEY, OR POET STUTTER*, is the most elaborate satire he had to endure, and it is amusing in its way though ill-humoured. There are three interlocutors, Johnson, Smith and Stutter (D'Urfey). A move is proposed to

the Cross Keys tavern, but Stutter objects. "There's such a noise there always," says he; "the pit on my first day, or Billingsgate itself, might pass for quiet places to it." "Nay," retorts Smith, "one of your similes will serve, for I think the Playhouse was a Billingsgate then." Johnson, for his part, promises Stutter a bad time when he reaches the Elysian Fields and encounters the great men from whom he has plagiarised: "If in this world he were well served like Æsop's Jay and every bird should claim their feathers, how naked he would be."

It was on other grounds than plagiarism that Tom received his trouncing at the hands of the Reverend Jeremy Collier. As everybody knows, that redoubtable ecclesiastic startled the dramatic world by bursting into its midst, brandishing a bludgeon of morality with which he belaboured half a dozen great reputations. On Tom he bestowed some of his most resounding thwacks, devoting indeed a whole chapter of his *SHORT VIEW OF THE ENGLISH STAGE* to an examination of the former's play of *DON QUIXOTE*. The indictment is drawn up under three heads: the author's profanity, his abuse of the clergy, and his immodesty; and through about ten pages of close print the divine dogs the dramatist with eager nose. Cold controversy is an uninviting topic, but I must quote one instance of Dr. Collier's critical method, since it introduces the verses in which Tom D'Urfey reached his highest level. "Drolling on the Resurrection" was the critic's severe comment on the lines:

Sleep and indulge thyself with rest,
Nor dream thou e'er shalt rise again.

Tom's natural affability was turned to indignation by Collier's animadver-

sions, and, like Congreve and others, he adventured in print to confute the apostle of religion and purity. In the case in point he had little difficulty. The "horrible, severe, and rigid critic," he points out, has practised the old stratagem of removing lines from their context. The complete song in *DOX QUIXOTE* from which they are quoted is as follows:

Sleep, sleep, poor youth, sleep, sleep
in peace,
Reliev'd from love and mortal care,
Whilst we, that pine in life's disease,
Uncertain blest, less happy are.

Couch'd in the dark and silent grave,
No ills of Fate thou now canst fear;
No more shall tyrant power enslave,
Or scornful beauty be severe.

Wars, that do fatal storms disperse,
Far from thy happy mansion keep;
Earthquakes that shake the universe
Can't rock thee into sounder sleep.

With all the charms of peace possest,
Secur'd from life's tormentor, pain,
Sleep and indulge thyself with rest,
Nor dream thou e'er shalt rise again.

Past are the pangs of fear and doubt,
The sun is from the dial gone,
The sands are sunk, the glass is out,
The folly of the farce is done.

It seems to me, I confess, that this elegy on a youth dead for love of his mistress has a certain noble gravity and pathos, admittedly not characteristic of D'Urfey, which might have saved it from Dr. Collier's onslaught and that its author's complaint is not unjustified. "Now will I be judg'd," he says, "by any reasonable man, if these words comparatively are not fitter for an anthem than a droll, but the Reformer's way of doing me justice is to take bits and morsels out of things, that for want of the connexion they may consequently appear ridiculous."

From the diatribes of a Collier it

is pleasant to turn to the gracious amenities of Addison, who came to Tom's assistance when the latter had more years than guineas. For he had fallen on evil days in the year of grace 1713. If money had come to him easily, it had with equal or greater ease flown away. He was, I fear, of an extravagant habit of life; the society he kept was expensive; he had a taste for fine clothes and the elegancies of existence,—he was, we are told, the last English poet to appear in the streets followed by a page—and he may have done a little gaming. Certainly he was fond of the turf and a familiar figure at Newmarket. Moreover he was a bachelor, which in his case probably meant that, instead of spending his money on one woman, he spent it on a score. Whatever the causes, Tom was in the result sore put to it for a living and much troubled by the importunities of duns. Some persons, however, laid their heads together and induced the management of Drury Lane to give a performance of his play *THE PLOTTING SISTERS* for his benefit. What was more, Addison, a fortnight previously had devoted a number of *THE GUARDIAN* to a charming plea for public support, which concludes with hearty eulogy.

After what I have said, and much more that I might say, on this subject, I question not but the world will think that my old friend ought not to pass the remainder of his life in a cage like a singing bird, but enjoy all that Pindaric liberty which is suitable to a man of his genius. He has made the world merry, and I hope they will make him easy so long as he stays among us. This I will take upon me to say, they cannot do a kindness to a more diverting companion, or a more cheerful, honest and good-natured man.

Apparently Tom did enjoy a measure of Pindaric liberty during the rest of his life, for when he died in

1723 he possessed a gold watch and a diamond ring, which he bequeathed to Steele to defray his funeral expenses. He was buried at St. James's Church, Piccadilly, where the tablet to his memory with the simple inscription, *Tom D'Urfey, Dyed Febry ye 26th, 1723*, may still be read. Nor did he lack fit epitaph. Some anonymous friend, probably a fellow-toper at the Queen's Arms in Newgate Street, Tom's favourite tavern, gave voice to his sorrow in the following lines, which were published in a volume of miscellaneous verses by various hands in 1726.

Here lies the Lyric, who, with tale
and song,
Did life to three score years and ten
prolong;
His tale was pleasant and his song was
sweet,
His heart was cheerful—but his thirst
was great.
Grieve, reader, grieve, that he too soon
grew old:
His song has ended and his tale is told.

With this tribute to Tom D'Urfey's
sweetness of song, cheerfulness of
heart, and greatness of thirst, we may

leave him. He had a place to fill in the world, and he filled it to the satisfaction of his fellows. The worst wasted of all days, it has been said, is that during which we have not laughed. In history the maker of laughter deserves honour, as well as the metaphysician who gives us a headache and the epic poet who sends us to sleep. Tom amused his generation, and we cannot doubt that his generation was the better for it. He enjoyed the patronage of the one monarch in English history who could claim to be a connoisseur in pleasure and an amateur of wit; he had the kindly hand of the gentle and subtle humourist of *THE SPECTATOR* and *THE GUARDIAN* to help him over stiles in his declining years; he lived, one can conjecture, a happy if vagabond existence, with few to say a hard word of him; his songs delighted his contemporaries. He was of no particular importance as a literary figure, he left no enduring work, and yet honest Tom did well. "The town may da-da-damn me for a poet, but they si-si-sing my songs for all that!"

WILLIAM G. HUTCHISON.

THE MYSTERY OF COLLABORATION.

(A PRACTICAL EXPERIMENT.)

THE Minerva Literary Society was languishing; indeed for some time past more than one of the members had been expressing their intention of resigning. There was perhaps not much danger of their really doing so, but the secretary, in the innocence of her heart, had asked the vicar to read a paper on Christian antiquities, on which he conceived himself to be an authority. Of course the worthy old gentleman welcomed his opportunity with joy, and for two hours and a half the unhappy society sat and listened to a learned, though contumacious, discourse on early methods of christening, marrying, and burying. But after it was over they fell upon the secretary with one accord, and promised that at the next meeting she should be severely censured, and another appointed in her stead.

It should perhaps be explained what the Minerva Literary Society was. It consisted of seven young ladies who had banded themselves together for the purpose of improving their minds on Thursday afternoons, and had been founded by the present secretary, Miss Delabere. This young lady had a cousin at Girton who had inspired her with an ardent desire for the higher, indeed for the highest, culture. Accordingly, when dispensing tea one day to three of her dearest friends, she suggested that they should form some society which might be of mental benefit to them. They were enraptured with the idea, and agreed that a literary society of some kind was what they had most

desired. The first and, as they naturally considered it, the most important question to be considered was the number of members. On a large sheet of paper they forthwith wrote down the names of all their acquaintances; and then they proceeded to eliminate them one by one according to their various disqualifications. Agnes, for instance, would always be wanting to introduce male visitors, and Isabel would be opposed to admitting any at all. Ethel had too good an opinion of herself, and May had too bad an opinion of other people. Finally they discovered that only three names on the list had nothing against them, and accordingly these three were duly elected. Seven was a highly fortunate number Miss Delabere explained; it recalled the Seven Sleepers and the Muses and lots of other literary things.

At this point Miss Gray interposed: she could not be quite sure, she said, how many Muses there were, but she knew it was not seven; it was more probably eight. This provoked a discussion. Miss Delabere was certain it was seven. She remembered them when she was at school, and proceeded to explain that they presided over the various branches of education which she had there studied. There were the Muses of mathematics, music, drawing, dancing, French, and German: that was six; what was the other? Oh yes, the Muse of callisthenics. Besides, had not Horatia told her so when she came back from

Girton? The others, though not convinced, allowed that Horatia's opinion carried a good deal of weight. Miss Paley ventured to suggest that, with all due deference to the learned cousin, she had heard, or read somewhere, that there were nine Muses. Miss Delabere did not dispute the fact that there might have been nine Muses once, but she was of opinion that the other two were dead. Her grandmother used to work samplers at school, she said, so there might have been a Muse of samplers, and perhaps another of deportment; but lawn-tennis and bicycles had killed them both. So it was decided that for present purposes seven Muses would do very well.

Then arose the next important question of a name for the Society. Miss Gray thought that it ought to be something classical, as they were following in the track of the Muses. How would the Venus Literary Society do? Miss Carter objected to Venus; it did not sound literary enough, she thought; it was more like a dancing-class. Having herself been educated at the Minerva College, she offered Minerva as a name suitable for consideration. Minerva was much approved, and forthwith adopted. They next proceeded to the election of officers and a committee. Miss Delabere's offer to act as secretary was gratefully accepted, Miss Gray was chosen president, while Miss Paley and Miss Carter occupied the less important (and less laborious) position of committee-women. The other three were to be ordinary members.

Invested with their new honours the friends felt better able to discuss the objects of the Society, and the lines on which it was to be managed. Miss Carter supposed that they ought to read some Shakespeare, and the others accepted the prospect as a

duty. Miss Delabere's suggestion of a monthly debate to relieve the tedium of perpetual reading was welcomed much more enthusiastically. Miss Paley also suggested that they should have a monthly paper dealing with events of national importance; she herself would be pleased to contribute an essay on the Origin and Evolution of the Toque. This happy proposal was universally applauded, and a note of Miss Paley's offer was made by the secretary. Then the minor details of subscriptions and so forth were decided, and the Minerva Literary Society was finally launched.

The great scheme was of course discussed at large by the outside world. The mothers of the members warmly approved of it, although their brothers and fathers were rather inclined to scoff. Harry Delabere, in particular, said that they were a lot of owls. The name caught, and in many quarters they were generally known as Minerva's Owls. However, they paid no attention to the scoffers, and their weekly meetings proved most successful. Miss Paley's paper on the Toque was said, by all who heard it, to be quite consummate, and the Society seriously considered the advisability of publishing Miss Baxter's essay on the Woes of Woman and the Mastery of Man. Occasionally too they had visitors. Miss Delabere's renowned cousin Horatia read a very able paper on the future of Women's Colleges, describing in graphic terms how women were gradually crowding men out of the great universities, and giving a striking picture of Trinity College as it is to be in the next century under female management. But by far the most famous meeting was when the long-haired Cyril Augustus Featherquill, author of *LYRICAL LAMENTS*, gave the society a paper on modern English poetry, illustrated by long and frequent

quotations from his own works. The members agreed afterwards that it was the finest thing they had ever heard, and even the guests invited for the occasion were full of praises.

Thus the Society had prospered exceedingly for more than a year. Then there came a relapse. It was Shakespeare that did it. In the annual report the secretary announced that in the course of the year there had been fifty meetings. At these meetings there had been thirty papers read, ten debates, five conversaziones with music and guests, and five readings; and of these five four had been given to Miss Marie Corelli and only one to Shakespeare. She ventured to point out to the Society, that they had not adhered quite strictly to the original plan, and in particular that Shakespeare had been somewhat neglected. The Society quite saw it, and in their anxiety to amend their ways passed a rash resolution to read six of Shakespeare's plays right off! They did it, but their patience was severely tried. It was just when they had finished the sixth play that the secretary asked the vicar to read his paper on Christian antiquities, with the result which we have seen. The next meeting was a scene of anarchy; every member rose in turn and made a long personal explanation, the substance of which was that the secretary ought to be ashamed of herself, and that the Society met for pleasure and not to hear long dull sermons. There was no business done in the way of a vote of censure, as, long before the usual time, the meeting had to break up, because the members were weeping too much to make any proposition at all. Tears are infectious, and the secretary went home and cried all night. Next day she was very pessimistic and opined that the Society had better cease; she had done her best for it and could do no more.

She was explaining this and other things to her mother, when her brother Harry came in. He regarded the thing as an excellent joke, and made sundry ill-advised remarks about having heard the hooting of innumerable owls in the night. Seeing, however, that his sister really took the matter very much to heart, he repented, and condescended to offer her some advice in a lordly way. "I'll tell you what it is," said he; "the owls are sighing for honour and glory, imperishable fame and that sort of thing. Why don't you make them write something and then get it printed? There's nothing like seeing yourself in print to put you in a good temper." Miss Delabere admitted, between her sobs, that the Society would like it, but was afraid that the friction was too great to permit of their listening to any proposal she might make. "Rot!" said Harry. "Go and make a cabal with Alice Carter, and get her to back you up; there's nothing like a cabal." His sister said that she would consider the matter, and finally resolved upon taking his advice.

In the afternoon accordingly she called on Miss Carter, and found that she, after a tearful night, was rather ashamed of herself, and not unwilling to listen to overtures of peace. So they kissed and made it up, with a few more tears to seal the compact, and then Miss Delabere divulged her plan. Miss Carter was delighted, and they settled at once on the cover of the book,—pale mauve, with swallows and daisies stamped in gold all over it. "But what are we to write?" she asked. Miss Delabere was not sure on this point. POEMS BY SEVEN MUSES, or DREAMS BY SEVEN SLEEPERS would be rather nice, she thought. Miss Carter doubted whether the Society would write very good poetry, and was quite sure it could not write dreams. "But what do people write,

when they want to write something and don't know what!" said Miss Delabere. "Novels, I suppose," answered her friend. Then they went into the subject of novels. Miss Carter had an aunt who wrote them, and knew, of course, how it was done. "It is quite easy," she said with conviction. "Aunt Emma just thinks out a title and then writes her book straight away. She does four or five every year and makes a lot of money out of them. If she can do them as quickly as that, seven of us ought to be able to write one a month." "But how are we to manage about it? And how about a plot?" "Oh, it doesn't matter about a plot. Study of character is the main thing in a novel nowadays. We must do it in this way. It must be in seven parts, and each of us must write a part. Then all we have to do is to add the parts together and the novel will be ready." "But don't you have any plot at all, or any hero or heroine, or any thing?" "Oh yes, we must have the same hero and heroine, and a sort of main plot which runs through all the parts, but we needn't worry too much about it; modern novels never do."

The plan sounded simple and inviting, and Miss Delabere finally agreed to propose at the next meeting that the Society should write a novel.

Next Thursday the Minerva Society met again. They were all rather silent and ashamed, and no one asked questions of the officers or displayed any interest in the business of the evening, until Miss Delabere asked permission of the President to introduce a motion. Having received it, she rose and spoke: "Miss President and ladies, I cannot help feeling that the honourable House is growing beyond itself; I mean, that it needs rather a wider scope for its energies than it has at present. You, Madam,

will doubtless agree with me, that the talent of honourable members, if properly directed, is capable of creating literary work which would be highly appreciated. (*Members wake up and applaud.*) Therefore it appears to me, and without doubt to you, Madam, that it would be little short of wrong for this House not to be handed down to posterity, as the creator of some literary monument. (*Loud applause.*) I therefore, with all due submission to the opinion of honourable members, propose that the Minerva Literary Society do write, and hereafter cause to be printed, a novel."

The members positively shrieked with delight, and of course the motion was carried by acclamation. Afterwards they showed their appreciation by passing a vote of confidence in their valued secretary. They then appointed a special committee of four, with Miss Delabere as chairwoman, to draw up a scheme for the writing of the novel, which scheme was to be presented at the next meeting. The Society broke up in the best of tempers, and it was a proud and happy secretary that went home that evening. She even went so far as to thank her brother for his advice, telling him that it had worked like a charm. He asked what they had decided on writing; was it a book of fashions? "No indeed," she said proudly; "we are going to embark on a work of fiction." At first he was incredulous, but when she assured him that it was really the case, he laughed immoderately and said with brotherly candour: "Well, all I can say is, you'll make bigger fools of yourselves than you did before."

During the next week the special committee met four times to discuss the novel and to draw up plans for its construction. The first meeting

was taken up with settling the title, on which point the committee found itself somewhat at variance. Miss Delabere and Miss Carter were minded to have a peaceful title which should give promise of tender love-scenes in the book, while the other two desired a title of a robust order, presaging ghosts and deeds of darkness. Finally they had to settle on a compromise,—*AGLIONE'S SWEET-HEART, OR THE WEIRD OF DEADLY GRANGE*. Miss Evans reconciled them to the double title by pointing out that it offered a wide field to the members; if they chose to indulge in the mysteries of love-making, with all its attendant joys and pains, the title sanctioned it, whereas for those who, like herself, desired to write in sterner vein, nothing could be more suitable than *THE WEIRD OF DEADLY GRANGE*.

At the next meeting they discussed the shape and length of the book. They agreed that it should be in seven parts, so that each member might have a freer hand. The length was a more difficult question. Miss Delabere, who had been making researches, thought that about seventy thousand words would be the proper length. Miss Baxter was afraid it would not be long enough, and it was absurd to limit seven people to almost as few words; she thought a hundred and forty thousand was the least estimate that the Society would entertain. The other two had still larger views. Finally they had to leave the matter to the discretion of the members, saying that, within limits (but they did not state the limits) each member might write as many words as she pleased.

The last two meetings were occupied with the plot, which really seemed fairly easy to evolve. The heroine was of course to be called Aglione, with Middleditch for a surname. The

hero was to be named Cyril Augustus, suggested by the chairwoman with just the suspicion of a blush, and his surname was Ponsonby. He was to have a wicked uncle living at Deadly Grange, and two wicked friends from Oxford, with one good uncle and two good friends from Cambridge as a compensation. His parents were to be recalcitrant, as Miss Baxter suggested with relish. The heroine should have a wicked aunt and a good aunt, two wicked friends and two good ones, and her parents were also to be recalcitrant. The main idea of the story was to be the endeavours of the hero and heroine to get married, and the efforts made by the wicked people to prevent them, partly counteracted by the influence of the good people. Minor characters such as men-servants and maid-servants, policemen and hired villains, might be left to the discretion of the members. Deadly Grange was to be an old red brick mansion with a moat, and its Weird was to be shrouded in mystery. The different parts of the novel were to be drawn by lot, and the member who drew number one should write the first part and the member who drew number seven the last. Finally, the committee ventured to suggest that each member should have her part ready at the end of a month.

When the special committee handed in its report on the following Thursday the rest of the Society expressed themselves satisfied, and it was accepted *in toto*. They also passed a resolution that no conversation should be allowed on the subject of the novel until the various parts had been submitted in their complete form, and had been read aloud to the Society. This appeared necessary, for fear of plagiarism.

During the month that followed the young ladies were extremely busy,

and their families saw very little of them. But though they all wrote so diligently, the prescribed month came to an end long before they did. As a matter of fact it was not till four months were over that they professed themselves ready to send in their work. But at last they were all ready, and it was decided to hold an extraordinary meeting at which each member should read her part aloud. Miss Delabere, who had a sort of consciousness that her own part was a trifle longer than it ought to be, proposed that they should meet early, as it would probably take some considerable time to get through the whole book. The others accepted the suggestion eagerly, and it was decided that they should meet on the following Monday at ten in the morning, and read and discuss the book, if necessary, all day. They also decided that, as it was such an important occasion, each member might bring two friends.

When it became generally known throughout the neighbourhood that the novel was finished and to be read aloud, there was a good deal of excitement about it, and much competition to be among the favoured guests. The result was that when Monday arrived each member brought, not two, but four or five friends all eager to listen to the great work. The members themselves, it was noticed, looked a little flustered and uneasy, as though they were doubtful of the success of the entertainment. However, they arranged their guests in rows and took their own seats at the end of the room. Then the President rose and opened the meeting in a graceful little speech. She was gratified, she said, to see so many friends present, and she trusted that the Society was going to give a good account of itself. Not to waste time, she would call upon Miss Trevor, who

had the honour of opening the book, to begin. Miss Trevor, blushing a good deal and obviously very excited, extracted from some recess a sheaf of manuscript (which looked portentously large) and began.

She opened with a masterly account of Deadly Grange, giving a thrilling description of the moat, "Whose glassy translucent waves allowed the eye to penetrate into the realms of nothingness, a dark abyss, whose gloomy depths concealed the unending tortures of lost souls." She occupied several pages with a description of the garden, which was remarkable for the care and taste displayed in its arrangement, with its clipped yew hedges, its sloping terraces, and smooth lawns. Then she introduced the hero busily employed in playing lawn-tennis with the heroine and two of their respective friends. He was "rather above middle stature, with fair hair curling crisply all over his head;" she was "tall, dark, and Juno-like, and her glossy locks shone like a raven's wing." A pretty love-scene followed the lawn tennis, in which the hero incidentally gave the heroine some account of his uncle, whose heir he imagined himself to be, and also of the Grange and of its Weird; the latter he did not allude to very circumstantially, but allowed it to be supposed that it was a grey-clad monk of malevolent temper. Finally the two young people engaged themselves, and the chapter ended in kisses. The next was a description of a dinner-party at the house of Aglione's father, in which the various characters of the book were severally introduced to the reader. The owner of Deadly Grange was a "sinister dark-looking man with thin lips, whose age might be anything from thirty to sixty." Aglione's wicked aunt, who sat next to him, was older than she looked, "and it was only by the use of cos-

metics that she had retained the reputation of being a handsome woman." Aglione's parents were commonplace, and Cyril Augustus's were not there. All their friends were there, however, and received a careful description, especially the wicked ones; the good uncle and the good aunt were also present. Then the writer proceeded to give a short but clear account of the various relations of all these people. The hero and heroine of course only wanted to marry each other. Her wicked uncle wanted to marry his wicked aunt, whereas he wanted and intended to marry Aglione. Aglione's wicked friends both wanted to marry Cyril Augustus, and his wicked friends both wanted to marry her. The good friends wanted to marry each other, as did the good uncle and aunt, and this simplified in some measure the action of the story.

It would be too long a task to give the contents of each chapter in detail, but in brief the story ran thus. At this eventful dinner-party the wicked uncle discovered that his nephew was also his rival in Aglione's affections, and the wicked aunt also discovered that her niece was her rival in the affections of the wicked uncle. Inspired by this knowledge they both determined on dark deeds. Aunt Emily (for that was her wicked name) conspired with Aglione's false friends to get the maiden out of their path. They tried several methods: first, they endeavoured to poison Cyril Augustus's mind against his love, but without success; next they hired a villain to kidnap her and, for a pecuniary consideration, to marry her. The villain made the attempt one evening, but Aglione's screams reached the ears of the hero's two friends, who stepped in and gave the villain a severe beating. Finally Aunt Emily in desperation made up

her mind to poison her niece. In the meantime the wicked uncle had been making attempts on his nephew. He tried first to marry him to an ugly heiress of prodigious expectations, whom Cyril Augustus indignantly refused. Then he cut him off with a shilling, at which Cyril Augustus laughed. Then he sent out against him certain bravos with bludgeons, and Cyril Augustus knocked them down. Finally he resolved to sacrifice him to the family Weird.

Matters had reached this pitch, when the bell rang for refreshments, as it was already one o'clock. Everybody congratulated Miss Trevor on her exciting story, especially Harry Delabere, who asked her how many more chapters there were. Only five more, she told him, at which Harry smiled enigmatically and retired.

After the interval Miss Trevor resumed her task. She extricated the hero and heroine from their difficulties. The wicked aunt tried to put poison into Aglione's cup of tea, but by mistake put it into her own, and died in awful agonies. The wicked uncle enticed Cyril Augustus into the haunted room at Deadly Grange and locked him in there, to be the prey of the Weird. Cyril Augustus, however, by dint of brave words and a revolver baffled the Weird and got out again, and when the wicked uncle returned, to see how it had fared with his nephew, he somehow shut himself in and could not get out. Next morning he was discovered dead in a corner, with his hair as white as snow. After this there was little left for the author to do, except to marry off the different people in the story, and this she did. The hero married the heroine, the good people married the good people, and, as a mutual punishment,

the wicked people married the wicked people. And then, amid great applause, Miss Trevor sat down.

There was silence for some time, and none of the members saw fit to make any remark, until the President collected her faculties and eventually rose. "We all, I am sure," she began, "are very grateful to Miss Trevor for her clever story, but of course she herself will be the first to realise that it will need a good deal of alteration if it is to be in harmony with the rest of the work." Miss Trevor rose indignantly, but was requested to defer her remarks until the debate on the subject. Then the President called on Miss Delabere to whom the second part had been entrusted. She had kept to her original idea of seventy thousand words, only modifying it in so far that she had written them all herself. Therefore it was considerably after tea-time when she had finished reading. She too received much applause, but the President had again to give a warning about the length and lack of cohesion of her effort. It was agreed that it was too late to listen to the third part that evening and they decided to meet again on the morrow, and voted that any of the guests who cared to come would be welcome; but there was an atmosphere of mutual suspicion about the members and they parted in silence. Harry Delabere, who had been taking notes in his pocket-book, was the most cheerful person in the room; he said that he would certainly come to-morrow, and every day for a week if necessary, at which the members looked at him doubtfully.

The morrow dawned and the Society again met to finish off the novel, before another large and appreciative audience. They found, however, that they could only get through two more parts, as Miss Paley and

Miss Evans, who had to read them, had taken full advantage of the generous limits allowed by the Society. It was decided that they must take another day, which extended itself to two, as Miss Baxter occupied the whole of the third day; in her part there were thirty-three love-scenes, all of some length.

In the meantime all the members felt rather as if they were sitting upon a volcano, which might begin operations at any moment. At the end of the fourth day, when Miss Gray had finished reading her part, which was the seventh and last, they sat and looked at each other in stony silence. The visitors were rather alarmed, and their alarm was in no way diminished when at last Miss Baxter said defiantly: "Well, at any rate I shan't alter or cut down my part a bit; I've taken too much trouble about it." The other members looked as if they privately held the same opinion about their own work, but still it was their duty to crush Miss Baxter, and they were just opening their mouths to do so when the President with a great effort saved the situation temporarily. "Ladies," she said, "it is rather late; perhaps we had better defer the discussion till next Thursday. Let us now have tea." So they had tea, and then went home.

For the account of the transactions at the last, and in many respects the greatest, meeting of the Minerva Literary Society we are indebted to the courtesy of Harry Delabere, who in some unexplained manner contrived to be present, and moreover to take minutes (impartial not secretarial minutes) which he has kindly put at our disposal. Thus we have been enabled to arrive at a fairly clear idea of what happened and of what the members said when it came to the point; and we think it is due to our

readers to put it before them as well as we can.

The novelists had had a week in which to think things over, but if they had had a month we doubt whether it would have made much difference to the ultimate issue, for it was obvious that from the first each one had steeled her heart against any weak compromise so far as she herself was concerned, and had determined that if any concessions were to be made, they must be made by the others. Bearing this in mind, then, we can hardly be surprised at the violence of the discussion. One thing we admit did surprise us: no one shed any tears at all; this at least is what our informant says, and he should know, as he is a person who is quick to notice matters of this sort. The explanation may lie in the fact that the subject was too serious for weeping, and it may be that the consciousness that they were now authoresses in their own right sustained them in the hour of trial.

They were all assembled on the following Thursday by half-past two in the afternoon, and the President opened the meeting without delay. She made use of the privilege of the chair to get in the first words, which from her own point of view was wise. "Ladies," she began, "it is no good preambing; we all know why we are here, and it will be as well to get to the subject at once. As it stands at present the Society's novel will not do. I am not going to mince matters, and I must say what I think candidly. It is really absurd that you should all have made your parts so long. One honourable member has written at least a hundred and forty thousand words." Here five of the members applauded and cast glances of indignation at Miss Baxter. "But the rest of you are every bit as much in error.

None of you has written less than seventy thousand, and some more, and for purposes of collaboration this is just as foolish." Here Miss Baxter applauded and cast glances of withering scorn at the five members. "I myself have written about seventy thousand, but I maintain that it is the duty of the President to give a lead to the Society in a matter of this sort [here all six members murmured loudly] and therefore that I should have done so is not excessive. But each of you should have been contented with at most ten thousand words. As it is the total number of words written must be nearly seven hundred thousand, and who on earth would read a book of that length? I shall now be glad to hear any explanations or propositions that the members may have to offer."

Miss Gray's not over-conciliatory speech was received without favour, and for several minutes the members, so many at least as were not inarticulate with rage, cried *shame*, *nonsense*, and other things. At length weariness produced a lull and Miss Delabere arose to say a few words. "I do not in the least agree with you," she said to the President. "You ought to have written less than anybody, being President. But I want to call attention to another thing. I came second on the list, and one would think that the first person would have left me something to write. But she didn't. She married Aglione to Cyril Augustus and everybody else to somebody else, and she killed the wicked uncle and aunt, so of course my part is nonsense, as I have married them all over again and brought the wicked uncle and aunt to life again and sent them to penal servitude. I want to move a vote of censure on Miss Trevor."

Down she sat breathless, to be succeeded by Miss Paley. "I want

to say something, too," she cried. "It is all very well for Miss Delabere to talk like that. I should like to know what she thought she was leaving for me! If Miss Trevor has made nonsense of her part, she has made mine even worse, because when my turn came I had to marry lots of people for the third time. And what right had she to send the wicked uncle and aunt to penal servitude when I wanted them to use again? It seems so silly to have to use people who have been killed once and afterwards sent to penal servitude, and it makes my last chapter, where they die, quite worthless. I beg to second the vote of censure on Miss Trevor and to move another on Miss Delabere."

Thus spoke Miss Paley, and after her came Miss Evans with a long catalogue of woe; but her cry for vengeance came first. "I beg to second the vote of censure on Miss Delabere, and to move another on Miss Paley. She has done just the same for me as the others did for her. She has killed the wicked uncle and aunt just when I wanted them for Botany Bay. It was bad enough that the hero and heroine should have been married twice before, but after her marrying them my doing so makes it the fourth time. What authority had she for putting Deadly Grange in Yorkshire on the top of a mountain? It ought to be in Hampshire where I have put it." Here there was a slight diversion owing to Miss Trevor and Miss Delabere rising and saying that Deadly Grange was in Cornwall and Kent respectively. "I do not agree with the objections of the honourable members; it is in Hampshire. I thought it was arranged that the Weird should be shrouded in mystery. Why then did Miss Paley make so substantial a thing of it as a black coach with four black horses which drives up to

the front door at midnight? I say nothing about Miss Trevor's making a grey monk of it, or Miss Delabere's turning it into a mail-clad figure without a head, clanking spurs and things in the corridor. The coach is what I object to. How can one make a coach and four extract faint strains of music from a ghostly spinet, which is what the Weird does in my part? It is all nonsense!" And with this parting shot down sat Miss Evans.

She was followed by Miss Baxter, who was somewhat incoherent with indignation. "I think it is a great shame, and I haven't written so very much more than the rest of you, and why you should all have combined to make nonsense of my part I can't think. I'm sure I don't know what I have done to offend you, and there are all my beautiful love scenes wasted because you've married them all, and people can't make love after they're married, and I beg to second the vote of censure on Miss Paley and to move another on Miss Evans, and I shall publish my part by itself."

To her succeeded Miss Carter who complained in much the same style, seconded the vote of censure on Miss Evans and moved another on Miss Baxter.

Last of all Miss Gray spoke again. She was in a state of subdued fury, both because as President she felt that she was to some extent responsible for the mistakes of the Society, and also because she had had the last part and so had suffered from them more. She spoke quietly, but with a sarcastic bitterness that was far more impressive than the outbursts of the others. "You are all very full of your own wrongs but you don't give a thought to me, your President, of whom you have made a complete fool. I took an infinity of trouble to write my part so that

it should do the Society credit, and what is the result? I shall be made the laughing-stock of the whole county. I will point out a few of your absurdities to you, that you may realise the silliness of it all,—if you can. Look what you have done to Thomas Brown, Cyril Augustus's wicked friend. Miss Trevor goes and marries him to May Smith, Aglione's wicked friend; Miss Delabere marries him to Aglione's Aunt Mary; Miss Paley marries him to the kitchen-maid; Miss Evans to Aglione's other wicked friend; Miss Baxter to one of her good friends; Miss Carter to the house-maid; and it seems to lack point when at last my turn comes and I marry him to Aglione's Aunt Emily. Then look at Aglione and Cyril Augustus. Every one of you marries them at the end of your parts, and how can I leave them to pine in single wretchedness when they have been married six times? It isn't decent! And then Aunt Emily and Uncle Henry! Three of you send them to Botany Bay and three of you kill them. Where do I come in? How can I leave them alive and well and enjoying the fruits of their crimes after that? It spoils one of my most powerful bits. As for your ghosts, I've no patience with them. Do you mean to tell me that the ones Miss Evans talked about, and Miss Baxter's little old lady, and Miss Carter's banshee are the same as my gentleman in evening-dress who shoots himself in the library every night when the clock strikes twelve? I did think you had more sense than that! The only words of sense you have spoken to-day have been when you moved votes of censure on each other, which I now declare carried. As for you others, you may do as you like; I shall send

my part off to a publisher to-morrow. I don't suppose any of you will get yours accepted, but you might publish at your own expense. I declare this meeting closed."

Miss Gray's speech had been punctuated by angry cries and objections, as might be expected, and the babel that arose when she finished was, so our informant says, absolutely deafening. But she had left her seat and had gained the door, and there was nothing to be done but to request Miss Delabere to take the chair, and this she emphatically declined to do. So amid indescribable confusion the meeting broke up for the last time.

Thus it was that the Minerva Literary Society ceased to be, and this is why none of those who formerly composed it are now on speaking-terms. On the whole, however, the world is a gainer, for had it not been for the dissolution of the Society, Messrs. Type and Forme might never have been able to announce the batch of important new novels which has recently gladdened our eyes.

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MACMILLAN'S MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, 1901.

PRINCESS PUCK.

CHAPTER XXVII.

POLLY said it was quite unnecessary for Bill to go to old Mr. Harborough's funeral, though the wish to do so showed a nice feeling on her part; and since she did wish it (and had a black dress) there really was no reason why she should not go, more especially as she was leaving for London the next day and would thus escape Miss Minchin's cross-questioning. But Gilchrist had other opinions; he strongly disapproved of Bill's going, seeing no reason for it and a great many against it. He himself had never claimed any connection with the Harboroughs during the old man's life and did not intend to do so at his death, except through the medium of the law. He said he should consider it an impertinence on his own part to go to the funeral. Bill agreed with him as to the propriety of his staying away, but persisted in going herself. Gilchrist became really angry, and told her it was absurd to go simply because Mr. Harborough had given her the diamond shoe-buckles; people who did not know the circumstances might put another construction on her actions. Bill said she did not mind that, and also that the shoe-buckles were only part of her reason for going.

"What other reason is there?" he asked.

"I want to speak—" she began and then broke off. "Oh, I can't tell you," she said impatiently. "I don't mind your knowing if only I had not the bother of explaining; as it is, I really can't go into it. You say so much about things, ask so many questions, see so many motives, and foresee so many consequences, that I really shall be obliged to give up telling you. I don't mind your knowing, and up till now I have told you things; but I am afraid I shall have to begin taking you in to save trouble."

"Do you know what you are saying?" was the beginning of Gilchrist's not unnaturally severe answer; the end was less pacific. However, there was no quarrel between them, but he was exceedingly angry with her sayings then, and even more so with her doings later on, for she went to the funeral in spite of him. It was not easy to quarrel with Bill, as she did not retaliate and did not mind; but also, as Polly knew, she could not be moved, quietly taking her own course unless you could convince her it was wrong; "and Gilchrist can't convince her," Polly said after the affair of the funeral. She herself advised Bill not to go when she found how strong was Gilchrist's opposition; but it did not make the slightest difference. Bill had promised Kit she would go, and she went.

it should do the Society credit, and what is the result? I shall be made the laughing-stock of the whole county. I will point out a few of your absurdities to you, that you may realise the silliness of it all,—if you can. Look what you have done to Thomas Brown, Cyril Augustus's wicked friend. Miss Trevor goes and marries him to May Smith, Aglione's wicked friend; Miss Delabere marries him to Aglione's Aunt Mary; Miss Paley marries him to the kitchen-maid; Miss Evans to Aglione's other wicked friend; Miss Baxter to one of her good friends; Miss Carter to the house-maid; and it seems to lack point when at last my turn comes and I marry him to Aglione's Aunt Emily. Then look at Aglione and Cyril Augustus. Every one of you marries them at the end of your parts, and how can I leave them to pine in single wretchedness when they have been married six times? It isn't decent! And then Aunt Emily and Uncle Henry! Three of you send them to Botany Bay and three of you kill them. Where do I come in? How can I leave them alive and well and enjoying the fruits of their crimes after that? It spoils one of my most powerful bits. As for your ghosts, I've no patience with them. Do you mean to tell me that the ones Miss Evans talked about, and Miss Baxter's little old lady, and Miss Carter's banshee are the same as my gentleman in evening-dress who shoots himself in the library every night when the clock strikes twelve? I did think you had more sense than that! The only words of sense you have spoken to-day have been when you moved votes of censure on each other, which I now declare carried. As for you others, you may do as you like; I shall send

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